

“IN ORDER TO ACCOMPLISH THE MISSION:”
A CASE STUDY OF THE CULTURE AND CULTURE TRAINING IN THE BALL
STATE RESERVE OFFICER TRAINING CORP (ROTC) IN 2007
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INTRODUCTION

As the United States vacillates between conventional military strategies and culturally attuned conflict resolution in the Global War On Terrorism (GWOT) there is an increased potential for cultural misunderstanding. By expanding cultural awareness and an appreciation of cultural differences the need for hostile action and armed conflict is lessened and a better opportunity for peaceful alternatives exists. At the forefront of any military operation is the corps of junior officers who lead Soldiers through assigned missions, regardless of national objective. Working with, and through, their Noncommissioned Officers (NCOs) these young lieutenants and captains are responsible for communication with a local populace and dynamic problem solving that involves mission-first orientation and cultural sensitivity. What happens inside a city, village, field, or city-street reflects the leadership of the unit and success is the result of training and the discipline of the Soldiers involved. With meaningful interactions with noncombatants becoming more frequent and more crucial to long-term stability than ever before, the professional education of the officers has to include issues related to culture.

The modern Army Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC), officially established with the National Defense Act of 1916, is a college-based program that offers scholarships in exchange for military service as a commissioned officer. According to a Department of Defense report on the military services (2004) an average of 54% of all Army officers (Active Component, Reserve Component, and National Guard) earned their commission through the ROTC. Cadets receive a baccalaureate or masters' degree

at an accredited college or university and are socialized into U.S. Army tradition and institutional practices through military science classes and field training exercises; including the 33- day long Leadership Development Assessment Course (LDAC) held every summer at Fort Lewis, Washington. Graduates of the ROTC program, also known as the Basic Officer Leader Course I (BOLC I), become Second Lieutenants and are sent to various Army schools; including infantry training (BOLC II) and branch specific training (BOLC III), before reaching their first assignment as an officer- usually as a Platoon Leader in charge of 20 to 60 Soldiers. Eventually, these men and women will be responsible for conducting a multitude of operations, in hostile and permissive environments, at home and abroad.

Ball State University, located in Muncie, Indiana, has approximately 20,000 students enrolled in 270 undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs (<http://cms.bsu.edu/AdmissionsLanding/UndergraduateAdmissions/EnrollmentProfile.aspx>). Of that number, approximately 100 students on campus participate in the ROTC program at any given time. Like other students these cadets pursue a multitude of academic interests in business, architecture, history, criminal justice, nursing, and the social sciences. They can be members of fraternities and intramural sports teams and they spend nights and weekends patrolling the party scene or hanging out in “the village” and at bars like The Herot or Doc’s. Others spend their free time at home in rented houses or dorms playing video games like Guitar Hero or participate in the otherworldly culture of the World of Warcraft. Though many are in the National Guard quite a few also hold part-time jobs at nearby restaurants and retail chains. A surprising number of cadets are married (7), getting married (5), or have children (4). This demographic is not

unique on campuses across the country or even in other ROTC programs, but these facts of life are a part of American culture and this culture includes cadets carrying a 40 pound rucksacks and an M-16's through the woods once or twice a semester.

This research argues that the culture of the cadet and future officer must be taken into account in order to conduct successful cultural awareness training. Because an individuals' culture is the framework upon which all other cultural understanding is built it becomes necessary for the cadet to learn to recognize key components of his or her culture in addition to the culture of others. Furthermore, the Ball State cadets interviewed in this research project have proved themselves to be critical thinkers and discerning users of cultural information. When one cadet was asked how he would prepare himself to teach other Soldiers about culture he said,

Getting away from the media, I think I would go and talk to as many Soldiers that have been in those environments and talk to them about the people they've had to deal with and get the story first-hand from them. What were the people like? What were the not-so friendly people like? And how can I portray that to make sure we are accurately showing the cultures as the Soldiers see them...I would just say that I think it would be beneficial to see more cultural training. With the new environment the United States Army is in right now, the predicament we are in, I think it is crucial to increase the culture awareness training to prepare the Soldiers for when the do deploy.

This is not a unique sentiment. Cadets know where to go find "good" cultural knowledge (from those who have experience with a particular culture) and they know what "bad" cultural information is (i.e. negative media portrayals). But it is also the Army's responsibility to appropriately train cadets in the area well. Though many of the interviewed cadets were unsure what or how American cultural factors would impact

cross-cultural communication two things was abundantly clear to cadets, 1) “given today’s current situation...cultural awareness training is one-hundred percent crucial” and 2) “ROTC-wide it would be very beneficial to increase cultural awareness training.” Additionally, while cadets have expressed a desire for more cultural information on the people of Central Asia and the Middle East they were very clear on the fact that it was personal experience, not rank or orders, that for them constitutes reliable knowledge here. This is the primary measure they employ when looking for cultural knowledge. Websites were a good source, but people were preferred. Though a senior officer or NCO may not have deployed they can still provide valuable information about Army culture. Conversely, a Private First Class returning from his second deployment to Iraq would be seen as an important source for information about culture.

Objective

With the Army’s continued involvement in multicultural environments, both foreign and domestic, it is imperative that appropriate culture literacy training becomes part of an officer’s skill set as early and as often as possible. While there have been few successful attempts to organize an immersive culture training inside all of the various ROTC programs around the country prior to 2007, U.S. Army Cadet Command has recently instituted (in a limited number of schools) a program that promotes the learning of foreign cultures and languages. Beginning FY08, a limited number of cadets from select schools will be able to participate in specifically designated culture and language studies programs and will be able to apply for cultural immersion internships (news release from the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense on May 08, 2007. On the

web at <http://www.defenselink.mil/releases/release.aspx?releaseaid=10844>). This plan to build cultural competency and culturally relevant doctrine represents a significant improvement for the Army and ROTC largely because culture is now being recognized as a key component of global military operations, one that must be addressed and expanded on throughout an officer's career.

During May through August 2007 Cadet Command began teaching a series of Terminal Learning Objectives (TLOs) at LDAC, its first cultural awareness training session designed for all cadets. The significance of this event lies in the fact that approximately 5000 cadets participated in this training and their learning experiences that will contribute in some way to their yet-to-be-evaluated understanding of foreign cultures within a military context.

The purpose of this research is to determine what culture awareness, and Army awareness training, means to the cadets that attended LDAC in the summer of 2007. One facet I will explore is the notion of culture as an obstacle. While conducting this research the idea that culture could become an obstacle first revealed itself during the practical exercise portion of the TLOs. Here the instructor told the assembled students that culture was important, something every Soldier and officer should be aware of, but a luxury when it came to completing the mission. I was sitting in the bleachers watching members of my platoon role play a scenario in which they had to execute a "knock-and-search," a common procedure Soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan use when searching homes for weapons and other contraband. When the cadets were thwarted by cultural taboos like the fact that only women may search or talk to the local women the officer in charge (OIC) of the training module intervened. He told all of the cadets, "It is nice when I can

be culturally sensitive and get the job done without offending anyone, but I will be damned if their culture is going to stand in the way of me completing my mission.” This statement highlighted the divergence between learning cultural awareness and practicing cultural awareness and points to a largely unacknowledged conceptual difference in the military between “cultural awareness” and “cultural competency.”

For the U.S. Army the term “obstacle” means two different things. First, foreign cultures, like a minefield or barbed wire entanglement, have to be successfully negotiated in order to accomplish a given mission. From a military standpoint, cultural knowledge can both help U.S. Soldiers and civilians on the battlefield and, in its absence, harm them. An understanding of an adversary’s culture can serve as a defensive measure that helps protect American assets while ignorance can become a dangerous roadblock to mission completion and the preservation of human life. This is a concept that is reinforced during the ten-day field exercise at LDAC. Research has revealed that Ball State cadets, when asked to describe the cultural awareness training at LDAC and the application of that knowledge during the FTX, tended to describe culture as an intangible force that could, and did, often interfere with the completion of the mission. At the heart of this notion were the “language barrier” and the inability to use all members of the squad to accomplish the mission, specifically the females who were marginalized in the culture of the “host nation” and subsequently devalued in particular phases of the military operation. Coincidentally, females faced similar challenges in the Army culture practiced at LDAC. Second, the Army by itself is ill prepared to academically decipher the intricacies and interconnectedness of numerous culture groups within notional and arbitrary borders. In order to do this successfully they must solicit help from

anthropologists who are both willing to aid the Department of Defense (DoD) and these can risk professional censorship from the American Anthropological Association (AAA).

The Human Terrain System (HTS) is a Pentagon-sponsored project that uses social scientists, linguists, and regional experts to build a collective pool of knowledge to inform U.S. policies and procedures that affect the areas in which they operate. Human Terrain Teams (HTT), typically composed of five civilians, are seen as the principle mechanism for gathering the cultural knowledge that will support military decision makers at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels (Beyerstein, 2007). Though this topic is hotly debated within the anthropology community one of the goals of this research is to explore alternatives for instilling cultural competency in Soldiers rather than finding new methods of data collection. Cultural literacy and adaptability are absolutely necessary skills for the senior leadership that design and order missions. However, this research is primarily concerned with how the Soldiers in the field, especially those who will soon become junior officers, respond to cultural difference.

Cultural obstacles are not a concept that only applies to the military personnel deployed to a foreign environment. It also encompasses the effective utilization of available cultural information that pertains to all aspects of a military operation. The divide between the discipline of anthropology and the military represents a most formidable challenge to the military having access to relevant, appropriate cultural information. Seemingly contrary paradigms and organizational agendas treat cultural knowledge as an intellectual commodity to be controlled and it is the Soldiers and young officers on the ground that can suffer for it.

In addition to the impact of Army culture training on ROTC cadets I will investigate the source of the training materials, specifically, the texts, experiences, people, etc. used to construct the knowledge base for the classes that were taught at LDAC. I will also explore the connection between this inquiry and the future of ROTC culture and culture training at LDAC and in the universities. In order to fully understand the issues that surround applied cultural competency in a military context, and the opposition to efforts like these from members of the anthropology community, it is imperative that I also look at the history of this relationship. To this end, I will discuss relevant literature, key arguments from both sides, and the official stance of the AAA.

This research rests on four assumptions. First, LDAC will be the location for the most widespread and focused culture training inside a Contemporary Operating Environment (COE) that most ROTC cadets will be exposed to prior to becoming an Army officer. Second, the U.S. Army and ROTC will continue to teach cultural awareness to cadets, with or without the sanctioned assistance of the anthropology community. Third, the Army, and the government as a whole, will suffer without sustained involvement from anthropologists. The mistakes that reflect a lack of cultural knowledge made by military officials are likely to be many and some of them will undoubtedly have long-term consequences. The final assumption is that there will most likely always be a rift between anthropology and military policy, one that can only grow wider in the absence of a shared dialogue.

My academic goal is to provide research that has potential for highlighting balanced, multidisciplinary solutions that will add to, and enrich, an extensive body of knowledge in the social sciences. My professional goal is that this research will explore

new dimensions in cultural competency that can be applied to Army training, improve fundamental knowledge of both American and foreign cultures, and ultimately lead to hopefully more peaceful outcomes to conflict. My personal goal is that by learning how other people understand culture in a military framework I will be able to learn more about myself, teach others what I know, and begin unraveling some fundamental questions and issues regarding cultural awareness and the military.

Significance

The reasons why soldiers understand, or do not understand, culture as an important mechanism is because this reflects the difficulties of transitioning from conventional warfare definitions of mission to peacetime strategies. This is evident in military operations other than war (MOOTW) as well as humanitarian aide, and other missions where force is undesirable because they require a significant commitment to cultural understanding and long-term partnership. A cooperation and dedication to culture as a means to better understand the Other is not just a symbolic gesture but can lead to peaceful solutions to civilian disagreement or hardship.

Initiating a robust cultural education program at the college and university level is the key to building sustainable cultural competency in ROTC cadets and future officers of the U.S. Army. When they graduate they will enter military service on active-duty, in the organized reserves, or in the National Guard. Nearly 5000 cadets trained at LDAC in the summer of 2007 where many of them saw culture training for the first and maybe last time before they deploy to culturally diverse locations like Central Asia, the Middle East, or the Horn of Africa. Gaining a better perspective of the culture that informs the

perceptions and understanding of foreign cultures is critical to designing and implementing a more adequate military training system.

The research into how knowledge of foreign cultures is transmitted in a military setting is important for several reasons. For the discipline of anthropology this knowledge informs practical application, adaptive research strategies and paradigmatic thought. For the Army results could affect the course of future training initiatives for both ROTC programs and deploying Soldiers in need of more in-depth cultural education. Understanding culture is not only fundamental to conflict resolutions, but it is also a more constructive way to generate and implement a variety of alternatives. I find the absence of an anthropologically disciplinary presence to be a serious omission on the part of academia considering the fact that hundreds of thousands of U.S. military and government personnel have been sent overseas, where the need for cultural interaction is so important and the potential for misunderstanding bears grave consequences for everybody involved.

This project will provide a base for future research work. Learning how culture is understood is a never-ending process whose value I hope to teach to my children, future students, and Soldiers of all rank. It is my goal here to synthesize the military and academic agendas regarding the teaching and use of culture into a relevant, and above all else, practical body of knowledge that will help bridge the gaps in the literature and serve as an invitation for an open dialog between anthropologists, military members of all rank, and policy makers.

Context

As previously noted, this research is situated within multiple contexts; all of which must be kept in mind here. Though being born in the United States is not a requirement for participating in the ROTC program all but one cadet at Ball State was born within its boundaries, with only a few coming from places outside of Indiana. Ball State cadets are primarily white, male, and middle-class with an average age of 23.

There are three overlaying contextual influences that impact the ROTC cadet-American culture, military culture (specifically Army), and university culture. It is the combination of these three factors that help define ROTC culture as a separate entity within American society. This research will highlight specific elements of cadet interviews that offer a better understanding of this cultural matrix. Certain aspects of American culture that might influence the outcome of a mission and whether or not a cadet was entering active-duty or the National Guard are points that will be stressed here.

When asked to describe what parts of American culture would come into play in a village in Afghanistan cadets typically responded that notions of independence, capitalism, and a preference for technology (meaning gadgets) would be very different from what Afghans might know. However, in saying this nearly every cadet stressed that the most important thing was how the Soldier could learn to see past the differences, identify the similarities, and work on building relationships with the local people. A 21-year old female criminal justice major told me

You can't take what we value and compare it to another country just because there are so many other attributes surrounding it...there are a lot of different things and you cannot assume that it is the same and other countries think it is the same.

While another cadet, an accounting major said

I think building relationships with the people there will be more valuable... I think if I deploy one of my goals will be to make those relationships with the people and let them know that the American Soldiers are there for a reason, for a purpose, and we're there to help them.

These statements, and others like them, underscore how vital to Ball State cadets see Army cultural awareness training, specifically, in relation to critical thinking. Even though by all accounts, including my own personal experience with ROTC cultural awareness training, culture is ultimately presented as an obstacle to be overcome on the way to mission completion. Nevertheless, Ball State cadets demonstrate they can reason beyond the available training. In the absence of better education this will prove especially helpful.

Aside from choosing what branch of the Army to serve in the choice of going on active-duty, into the National Guard or the organized reserves is probably the next biggest career decision a cadet can make. If a cadet is accepted as an active-duty officer this will be his or her job twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, food and housing expenses paid. A cadet who enters the National Guard or Reserve Component drills one weekend a month and two weeks a year but must find a civilian job to meet all of their needs. One National Guard cadet summed up training for the separate organizations, saying

As far as a difference, obviously the active-duty guys are doing it 30 days a month. They're just training non-stop and they can focus more on that. And the difficulties that the National Guard and Army Reserve run into is you only have two days a month to train and you really want to fit in as much as you in those two days. I think that is the

biggest difficulty, trying to keep up with all the tasks that need to be completed when you've only got two days to do it.

Another cadet had different concerns. She told me that as a National Guard officer

You're doing your job and you have one weekend a month but you are still putting in many hours outside of that one weekend a month. But you also have a regular job and you have a home that you need to take care of and all of these things where in active-duty everything is taken care of for you... You don't have to deal with a second job. You really don't have to take care of doctor bills and insurance and figuring out how to coordinate all of these things. As for myself, as a National Guard cadet and soon-to-be National Guard officer, I will have to balance a lot... You have to balance your work with the Army and you have to prioritize and you have to think about what you have to do, not just in the Army, but [also] in life on a daily basis.

Though there are obvious differences between active-duty and National Guard officers the most important factor that impacts this study is the mindset of the cadet who knows which organization they will be going to. The cadet that is going active does not receive his branch assignment until mid-November and usually does not know what unit he or she will be going to until April of the year they graduate. On the hand, the National Guard cadet almost always knows which branch they will be going to as soon as they request it. This is because assignments are made at the state level and the Professor of Military Science (PMS) works with the decision makers to get the cadet the branch they want. The cadets also know what unit they will be going to because they are currently serving in it or because they had made arrangements with another unit in advance of their branch selection. The biggest difference, however, is that National Guard cadets must make finding a civilian job a priority; as well as finding a home, insurance etc. This typically translates into less time for ROTC during the senior year. This is not to say that

MS IV cadets do not care about the underclassmen or do not do everything that is asked of them. Nor does it mean that cadets going into active-duty are anymore dedicated, it just means that their priorities have understandably shifted in another direction.

Though I have identified at least four separate contexts that will affect both the analysis and conclusion of this research one context that I have not mentioned yet is that of a nation at war. The war on terrorism has impacted people and cultures worldwide; none more so than the men and women who not only prepare for war, but also those who prepare to lead Americans Soldiers into it. The students who stay with the ROTC program and earn commissions as officers in the U.S. Army are well aware of the fact that they will be called upon to serve their country and that it is only a matter of time. The ROTC program at Ball State, like other Army training environments, is a place that fosters bravado and adventurism, real or imagined. I have never once heard a cadet say that they would not deploy in a minute or that they were scared. There may be grumblings about troop call-ups but they are talked about with a sense of inevitability. Most of the cadets I spoke with are idealistic and they believe that they can make a difference in some way, however small it may be. These are the cadets that will deploy to foreign lands, who listen carefully when instructors discuss tactics and first-aid on the battlefield, who pick the brains of those who have been to places like Afghanistan and Iraq, and who are always trying to find a better way to complete the mission.

Bias

I am a 32-year old white, middle-class male who was born and raised in the Flint, Michigan area and this research reflects all of the biases inherent in these facts. I

graduated with a baccalaureate degree in anthropology from the University of Michigan-Flint in 2001 and joined the active-duty Army as a Psychological Operations (PSYOP) Specialist in 2003. After completing all necessary training I deployed to Afghanistan in March 2005 and remained there for nine months. Upon my return I was promoted to the rank of Sergeant and was the noncommissioned officer in charge (NCOIC) of various teams prior to my assignment as a ROTC cadet and subsequent arrival at Ball State University.

The biggest influence on this research is the fact that I have active-duty experience in the Army. However, because the Ball State ROTC program uniformly treats every cadet like they have no prior knowledge of Army practices and procedures the affect that prior service had on my training was negligible. On the other hand, I was able to gain additional insight from the training and compare that with the Army schools and training I had previously received, including my deployment. This insight has allowed me to more easily recognize the system of symbols and meanings common to a military framework and apply these insights to ROTC cultural awareness training at LDAC in 2007.

METHODOLOGY

“I would say that I would rather not utilize the media whenever possible just because you always hear that stipulation where the media is not portraying it the way it actually is. The thing I like is, with a lot of soldiers in today’s Army, they’ve been deployed, they’ve been overseas and for me especially- get the information from them. Talk to the guys who just got back from deployment and listen to their stories and what they went through, what they saw and what they liked and use those stories. I trust those stories more than I would any form of media.” – Ball State cadet talking about the best sources for information about other cultures

Population Sample and Techniques

This research uses ethnographic methods to observe, record, and analyze various cultural aspects associated with the Ball State University ROTC program, including a specific focus on the cultural awareness training that occurred on campus and at the Leadership Development Assessment Course (LDAC) in 2007. I decided to study the BSU ROTC cadets for two reasons. First, because I too am a Ball State cadet and I felt that I was ideally situated to study this organization and interpret its system of symbols and meanings. Secondly, Warrior Forge 2007 (LDAC) represented the first time that all ROTC cadets commissioning in the summer of 2007 and in 2008 would receive the same cultural awareness training. This is significant because it impacted nearly 5000 thousand future officers and for many of them, it could be their only opportunity to practice cultural competency inside a simulated contemporary operating environment (COE) before deploying to locations around the world. Studying ROTC cadets at Ball State allowed me the opportunity to conceptualize a theoretical framework for cultural

understanding that must operate in the high-stress situations of a foreign, conflict-oriented environment.

The research sample included ten key informants and approximately 30 other informants. The primary sample consisted of ten MS IV cadets, seven males and three females, from the BSU ROTC program while the secondary sample was made up of ROTC underclassmen. The majority of the observations took place on Ball State's campus and during the field training exercise (FTX) portion of LDAC (Fort Lewis, WA). The cadets came from a variety of backgrounds. This ranged from never having attended Army training outside BSU ROTC to having multiple years of active-duty experience and wartime service in Afghanistan and Iraq. The ten cadets chosen as primary informants came from a total pool of 12 with two not available for interviews. These cadets have been assigned to nine different branches (from a total of 16) of the Army; a decision based on individual preference and needs of the Army, and all ten cadets attended different LDAC training regiments (from a total of 13) and thus have unique experiences not shared by the others.

To look at how ROTC cadets understand culture, I chose to measure demographic data, past experiences with foreign cultures, and deployment history. The demography of my informants, including; age, prior service, academic major, and family members with past or present service, were important factors because they established a baseline for the construction of cultural knowledge, especially regarding the military. This included what the individual learned prior to joining the ROTC program, what the cadet learned as a result of formal military education, and what the individual learned as a ROTC cadet but was not a part of the curriculum. A cadet's past experiences with cultural difference, not

including deployment, is another key component in the conceptual framework that, when shared with others, becomes a part of a team philosophy. Teamwork as an approach to learning and problem solving is a concept that is introduced during Basic Training and reinforced throughout a Soldier's Army career. This is especially significant because this approach is also reflected in ROTC training and has not previously been considered an important factor in cultural education.

This research project incorporates data from five documents (USACC, TRADOC) utilized by the Army for cultural awareness training. These are the only verified material that could be located. A review of these training documents allowed for a better understanding of what was intended for cadet culture training versus what it actually meant to them. This led to a clearer understanding of the term "culture."

Survey Instrument and Pre-test

During this research project participant observation was supported by semi-structured interviews designed to fill in gaps in the researcher's knowledge of the cadet cultural education process. The line of questioning was broken into four components intended to solicit more information about ROTC culture and culture training. These categories consisted of demographic data and also included general questions about culture, training, and culture awareness training. The questions themselves were not intended to be exhaustive, but were rather a technique to promote conversation and story telling about LDAC. Interviews typically averaged one and one half hours in length with the longest exceeding three hours.

The initial line of questioning was vetted through one cadet who did not participate in the final interview process. As well, all the other interviews ended with two questions, “What should I have asked but did not?” and “Is there anything else you would like to tell me about ROTC culture, cultural awareness training, or culture in general?” Their responses, if especially relevant to the research, would then be added to the list of questions asked other cadets.

Limitations

The biggest limitation to this research is that cadet responses were retrospective. However, interviews appeared to be unaffected by the intervening months between cadet experiences at LDAC and their conversations with me, which took part no more than six months after LDAC. When one cadet had trouble remembering specific instances of cultural awareness training at LDAC I asked her if it had been too long and she said that this was not the case, a statement that was supported by her highly detailed descriptions of other training elements. Instead, she told me the reason she could not remember culture training was because she was never chosen to participate in the role-playing scenarios. This is something to be discussed further here.

Though both the Air Force and Navy have ROTC programs at colleges and universities throughout the country this study is focused on Army ROTC and more specifically, Ball State Army ROTC. The Ball State ROTC program is, by comparison with other university ROTC programs, small, averaging approximately 75 cadets on campus. In 2006 and again in 2007 BSU ROTC added the satellite ROTC programs at Indiana Wesleyan and Indiana-Purdue Fort Wayne respectively. These cadets are not on

campus but do participate in all training exercises held on the weekends. One cadet from each satellite campus was interviewed for this research because they had participated in all BSU ROTC functions prior to the establishment of the new local programs.

The cultural awareness training at LDAC in 2007 may be the only opportunity for newly commissioned officers to practice cultural competency prior to deployment. However, this research did not look at the two training schools new Second Lieutenants must attend after graduating from college or university. Basic Officer Leader Course (BOLC) II is a field leadership lab that focuses on infantry tactics and is six weeks long. BOLC III is a branch-specific school approximately eight to twenty weeks long (branch dependant) that teaches the new officer the basic skill set of his or her career field. However, today cultural awareness training was not a scheduled event at any of these schools though this is subject to change at any time.

LITERATURE REVIEW

It is not too early to call for a Renaissance in Strategic Education- for military and civilians alike. In diplomacy as in academe and in the media, there is unquestionably a need for greater strategic literacy, and the military can play a constructive role; but by the same token, the military will have to free itself from the Clausewitzian straitjacket if it ever wants to make a significant contribution to grand strategy...If ours is the age of the “strategic corporal (Krulak), NCOs and junior officers will need a different kind of “situational awareness” than in the past- and that, in itself, will call for a radical transformation of professional military education (PME). -Tony Corn (Clausewitz in Wonderland, 2006)

Field Training

Catherine Lutz’s *Homefront: A Military City and the American 20th Century* (Beacon Press 2001) is primarily concerned with the establishment of Fort Bragg and its effect on the city of Fayetteville, NC and the surrounding community (Cumberland County). Since this book is set in the late 20th century it is not surprising to find the majority of the study revolves around World War II, the Cold War, and Vietnam. There is little mention of the Korean War.

Though there is also very little here that contributes to the understanding of the organization of modern ROTC programs, Lutz’s chapter entitled *Simulating War at Home: Counterinsurgencies, Foreign and Domestic (1948-1963)* (pp. 87-130) is important because it highlights the training exercises that prepare Soldiers for war; a concept common in military education. Today, war games are more commonly known as Field Training Exercises (FTX) and Situational Training Exercises (STX). The focus of

this training is usually the strategy, tactics, and techniques necessary for successful mission completion within the contemporary operating environment (COE). However, now as then, a significant portion of these exercises are devoted to poorly understood human variables; insurgents, counterinsurgents, and civilians on the battlefield (COB). These of course are factors related to culture and cultural awareness.

A common thread to war games past and present is that in these games the Army is training for unknowable future based on sociological, economic, and political realities as defined by the United States at that time. In the late 1940s and early 1950s the U.S. military centered their war-gaming on the threat of nuclear strike, efforts that increased after the Soviet Union first detonated atomic weapons in 1953. In 1954 the Army commenced a large-scale training operation called Exercise Flash Burn that involved sixty-four thousand men at Fort Bragg, North Carolina (2001:88). Though the main goal appeared to demonstrate that the Army could still play a vital role in a nuclear age that appeared to favor a larger Navy and Air Force. This exercise also focused on small unit tactics and the role of the Army in civilian affairs, especially regarding infrastructure sustainment and mortuary services. Ultimately, the proliferation of nuclear arms and the inescapable conclusion of mutually assured destruction led the U.S. to redefine its responsibility on the world stage. With the aid of National Security Council directives U.S. strategy soon shifted towards a policy of carefully guarded secrets, deterrence, and a global policing of technologies that could lead to nuclear capabilities among other nations. The perceived threat embodied by the Soviets and the spread of communism brought about the Cold War and with it. America's introduction to the counterinsurgency warfare would characterize the remainder of the 20th and early 21st century warfare.

Counterinsurgency training has necessarily changed with the complexity of America's involvement in foreign affairs. The advent of this (then) new mode of warfare, including the accompanying training system, required more than ever, a reliable, unbiased source of cultural knowledge. Though it is debatable that an objective data pool will ever inform military training, several trends for enhancing the robustness of field exercises appear to have been established during this time. This included, most notably, the practice of involving all the different types of units (e.g. infantry, logistics, personnel services) that would be working together during an operation (a concept that has been redefined today under the Army's modular system), utilizing citizen-volunteers in the vicinity of the post for role playing duties, and making use of personal experiences relevant to the training scenario.

Perhaps the most important of these concepts applied to Warrior Forge 2007, the field portion of the Leadership Development Assessment Course (LDAC), was of personal experience. The majority of cadre members and evaluators, also known as "TACS," had been deployed in the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) and their counseling and advice were meant to ground the cadet and his or her actions in the realities of this kind of warfare. The same was true for the role players, most of whom were infantryman from the 2nd Infantry Division who had served multiple combat tours. Where a TAC was likely to explain the significance of a gesture or misstep in the overall success or failure of the mission role players could reward a cadet squad leader for particular conduct by helping him or her safely complete the mission or punish them by "killing" members of his or her team.

One of the earliest known mass field exercises, conducted at Fort Bragg, was codenamed Swift Strike III (1954) and involved 100,000 men of the 82nd Airborne Division, Special Operations Forces (SOF), combat service support personnel, and an unknown number of participants from the surrounding counties (2001:94-96). Swift Strike III was modeled after an imagined culture of a communist Dominican Republic or Indo-China, cultures and regions that were mostly inaccessible to war game designers. Throughout the month long exercise the less than authoritative sources of data, those that informed military strategic thinking, and by extension the American public, resulted in a general confusion about whether the communist enemy was foreign or domestic. There was similar confusion about whether the enemy's targets were within the U.S. or outside. This, as Lutz suggests, "illustrates how the Cold War was connected to the idea of play and imagination on the one hand, and to the deadly serious business of preserving and contesting the racial caste system [of the other]" (96). The failure to properly identify and portray an enemy seen as a scourge upon the world and a threat to democracy everywhere reflected the uncertainty that gripped the country. This meant that the meanings attached to this exercise rested more on fear and ideology than more reliable forms of knowledge about America's opponents of the time.

Although most of the key elements for a successful counterinsurgency war game were present during early simulations like Swift Strike III, these exercises failed to adequately understand and incorporate the cultural component needed to make sense of the contexts that informed all the actors. According to John A. Nagl, author of the forward to the University of Chicago Press edition of the Counterinsurgency Field Manual (2007),

The sad fact is that when an insurgency began in Iraq in the late summer of 2003, the Army was unprepared to fight it. The American Army of 2003 was organized, designed, trained, and equipped to defeat another conventional army; indeed, it had no peer in that arena. It was, however, unprepared for an enemy who understood that it could not hope to defeat the U.S. Army on a conventional battlefield, and who therefore chose to wage war against America from the shadows (2007:xiii).

However true this may be, according to Douglas C. Waller's *The Commandos* (Dell Publishing, 1994) the Army made immense strides in the 1960s when newly funded Special Operations Forces preparing for deployments to Vietnam were trained at Fort Bragg. SOF, composed of Special Forces (SF), Psychological Operations (PSYOP), and Civil Affairs (CA) (the Rangers and 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment [SOAR] were later added), these units specialized in unconventional warfare and counterinsurgency. Their missions depend on their ability to adapt, and work with, a multitude of foreign cultures. Their training is similar to some previous units in that planners make extensive use of locals as role players. These men and women portray civilians, partisans, insurgents, friendly and hostile guerilla forces, and other people encountered during the course of a SOF operation. Locals take much pride in their work and feel personally responsible for providing Special Forces with tough, realistic training. In fact, the same families have been playing various roles for so long that they are passed down to other members of the family generation after generation. Though conventional U.S. forces do not usually undergo the same prolonged level of involvement because of their size and mission, the thorough, realistic, in-depth nature of training employed by the Special Forces is the gold standard all units strive for, including Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) programs on campus and at LDAC.

The “field” is the ultimate test of a Soldier's ability to effectively carry out his or her mission (some MOS's do not regularly participate in field training exercises because of the nature of their job, however every unit is required to maintain individual proficiency at core tasks such as first aid and marksmanship.). Both Basic Combat Training (BCT) and (most) Advanced Individual Training (AIT) finish with a week long FTX where the Soldier must apply their newly acquired skills in simulated combat conditions. Indeed, many MOS's have multiple FTX's, STX's, and CFTX's throughout their training cycle. ROTC is no different. Most schools, including Ball State, conduct one or more of each during the academic year and all cadets in their third year of ROTC regardless of school, are required to attend LDAC. LDAC, much like BCT, focuses on basic Soldier skills and concludes with a rigorous FTX, in this case 10 days of field training.

In addition to the warrior skills (shooting, moving, communicating) ROTC and the Army Initial Entry Training (IET) (comprised of BCT and AIT) programs teach students the same core group of fundamentals - Army culture and values, history, customs and courtesies. ROTC is also similar to other military training in that field exercises are usually preceded by classroom instruction; however, ROTC spends significantly more time doing this. But perhaps the most important difference between IET and ROTC lies in the fact that, unlike new Soldiers who spend nine weeks or more being fully immersed in Army culture, cadets rarely spend more than a couple of hours per day in uniform and not more than a few scattered weekends throughout the academic year in the field prior to going to LDAC. The one exception to this, especially at Ball State, is for those cadets who are simultaneously serving in the National Guard (referred to as SMP [Simultaneous Membership Program] cadets). These cadets are still required to drill one weekend a

month (if there is no ROTC training scheduled for that month) but their training experiences vary from nominal support staff to shadowing other officers to platoon leaders to little or no participation at all. The only apparently universal experience these cadets all share is that of the ROTC program.

ROTC Context

There can be a disjunction between the goals of the Army and ROTC. Michael S. Neiberg's book, *Making Citizen Soldiers: ROTC and the Ideology of American Military Service* (Harvard University Press, 2000), describes the historic divide between Army and ROTC and characterizes ROTC as a unique organization. Neiberg examines the evolution of the military and its relationship with higher education using ROTC as a lens. To this end Neiberg states, "understanding ROTC, then, has importance beyond understanding officer procurement and training" (2000:6) and I could not agree more. The author's research and mine treat ROTC as a subculture of both the military and the university, situated within the context of American culture; however, significant differences occur in the scope of each respective study. This research is limited to a single branch of service and a single ROTC unit and it focuses on the cadets themselves and the meanings they ascribe to the unit and certain training events. Neiberg looks at a dozen or more universities across every branch of service. He focuses less on the cadets' experience and more on the military and academic bureaucracies that helped inform ROTC policies and shaped the modern program. Neiberg's work nevertheless makes an important contribution to this study in that it provides a historical context for the attitudes and institutions that define ROTC today.

Two pieces of legislature were instrumental in the establishment of the Reserve Officers' Training Corps. The Morrill Act of 1862 proposed the sale of 30,000 acres of public land in order to establish public colleges, all of which would be required to offer courses in military tactics. The National Defense Act of 1916 created the ROTC as a means to standardize that military training and to help professionalize the officer's corps serving in the organized reserves and National Guard. While these two measures directly benefited the strategic aims of the military, especially America's involvement in World War I, they also met the approval of universities who eagerly sought ROTC programs as part of their patriotic duty. Indeed, for many years after the initial allocation of ROTC programs there was a waiting list several years long for colleges that wanted to demonstrate their commitment to national defense.

ROTC also had the support of the American people and the National Guard (who would received the majority of ROTC trained officers), because the result would be a body of officers educated close to home and possessing local values. This was in contrast to the service academies (West Point and Annapolis) whose future officers were isolated in a closed military environment and (feared to be) prone to military elitism, which could threaten civil liberties and American society. Distrust of professional officers and standing armies, both of whom were thought to work in the interest of state over that of the people, reflects the history of the American Revolution and British colonialism of that time. Neiberg argues at the heart of ROTC development and growth was the fact that, "ROTC played a critical role in fulfilling a powerful American belief: that the military must be subservient to civilian interests for it to truly represent and defend the interests of the society it serves" (2000:13), a position that dates back to the Moderate Whig tradition

(18th century). The belief that the men and women who train to become officers should be citizens first and soldiers second coupled with the “preference for nonprofessional officers [that] had become a consistent feature of American culture” (2000:22) set a foundation upon which ROTC rests today.

Though ROTC embodied established cultural values that characterized nearly 250 years of American military history, it still had to prove flexible enough to meet the demands of both the armed services and the changing socio-political climate of college campuses around the country. The program has gone through fluctuations in enrollment, curriculum changes prompted by the Department of Defense (DoD) and university policy, and the turmoil of the 1960s and 70s. However, at its core ROTC has been able to adapt to cultural trends and correct past mistakes, albeit slower than many may have desired.

The Vitalization Act of 1964 allocated more scholarships for cadets in order to address dwindling enrollment, but this act did not change some of “the most objectionable features of ROTC...[the emphasis on] military ceremony and drill as a means of achieving order and discipline” (2000:111). The “high visibility” profile of ROTC units became especially problematic during the period of escalating anti-Vietnam War sentiment. ROTC cadre was able to mitigate this because it chose to avoid potential conflict wherever they arose. Following the Vietnam War ROTC drastically improved its recruitment and enrollment of females and African Americans and improved the quality of its instructors and curriculum, bringing the program more in line with university academic standards. But perhaps the most significant transformation involved neither

academic principle nor administrative oversight; it was, in fact, a policy change intended to produce dynamic leaders and manager's not just technologically proficient officers.

To achieve this the officer education process was refined shortly after World War II, and has been modified after every major conflict since then. During his opening address at the Contemporary Military Forum on leader development at the Association of the United States Army's Annual Meeting and Exposition (9 Oct 2007) Lt. Gen. William Caldwell IV, commanding general of the Combined Arms Center and Fort Leavenworth, KS, argued that "'learning how to think' not 'what to think' is a change sweeping through intermediate officer education with implications in educating junior officers, warrant officers, noncommissioned officers and civilians" (Training programs changing focus to develop adaptive leaders, AUSA News, 1 Dec 2007). Maj. Gen. W. Montague Winfield, commanding general of U.S. Army Cadet Command supported this saying, "the common Basic Officer Leadership Course I [BOLC I] for ROTC students is 'focused on creating agile and adaptive leaders.'" These statements, combined with the teachings of ROTC instructors (at Ball State and LDAC) and the attitudes of the cadets I spoke with suggest a shared unity of purpose on this point up and down the Army chain of command. The need for instruction of this kind no doubt has become more evident given the current state of affairs in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The primary mission for Army ROTC is to train leaders to earn their commissions as Second Lieutenants. David Axe's book, *Army 101: Inside ROTC in a Time of War* (University of South Carolina Press, 2007), looks at the University of South Carolina Gamecock Battalion and describes some of the training events used to develop the critical leadership skills the Army officer corps values. Axe discusses how the FTX helps hone

combat skills and troop leading procedures and touches on the value of land navigation and physical training (PT). Unlike other literature concerning ROTC *Army 101* focuses on the stories and history of various individuals, including their motivations, relationships with other cadets and cadre, as well as their fears. Axe's interviews with students also uncover some key symbols and institutions- military schools (Airborne, Air Assault, Ranger, LDAC), scholarships, "war stories," branching, commissioning, and drinking- that define and inform a cadet's life. These symbols and their associated meaning are part of a culture that is neither fully Army nor fully college informed, but rather is a combination of both situated within the larger context of American culture. Though Army ROTC cadets can represent the best of the cultures they are socialized in, they can just as often portray a grittier side of Americanism. Axe captures this sentiment best when he says, "inasmuch as American popular culture is drunken, violent, narcissistic, and profane, the U.S. Army is, too" (2007:31) and so too, by extension, are the ROTC cadets at Ball State University.

Army Culture

It goes without saying that there is a large difference between playing Army in ROTC and being Army in the National Guard, organized reserves, or on active-duty. As mentioned earlier, each branch of service (Army, Navy, Air Force) has a distinct culture, which in turn fosters unique subcultures that persist down to the squad level. This is discussed in Beitz and Hook's Internet article, *The Culture of Military Organizations: A Participant-Observer Case Study of Cultural Diversity* (<http://www.pamij.com/beitz.html>, accessed 29 Oct 2007). Beitz and Hook argue that

“cultures appear to be a function of two principal factors: the characteristics and style of the senior leader, and the particular setting of the organization” (1). Under the Army’s normal operating structure of the Army both of these factors are subject to change, but none more so than that of senior leader. To illustrate this point the authors look at one particular unit under the command of three separate generals. Despite the fact the unit itself retained the same level of overall effectiveness, the culture and character were much altered by the leadership style of each commanding general (CG). The authors contend that this organization, and others like it, maintain their cohesion through “cultural anchors,” rites and rituals, heroes, and through cultural networks (6).

ROTC units have many of the same rites and rituals that regular Army units have. There is a hierarchy and rank structure and cadets are held to most of the same standards that govern the rest of the Army, especially with regards to the wearing of the uniform (see AR 670-1). Cadets go to PT, perform drill and ceremony, and are given awards for their achievements. Though no ROTC program has ever asked one of its students to charge a hill in the name of their university they do have folk heroes who inspire cadets through word or deed (e.g. a consistently high PT score).

However, perhaps the most salient dimension of ROTC culture (in this case BSU ROTC) is its cultural network. This network is characterized by two factors. The first is the experiences of the cadre who have served in different branches of the Army (e.g. Military Intelligence, Ordinance, Infantry, etc.) who have come together at different points in their careers (though it is typically at the end) to teach cadets. They communicate Army traditions and standards top down to the cadets, but their own leadership styles often tend to have minimal effect on the local Ball State organization

due to the brevity of both their stay and that of the cadets there. At best, a cadet can expect the commander and senior NCO to be in their respective positions no more than four years. During my two years with the BSU ROTC program we lost one instructor, two senior NCOs, and the commander.

The other factor in the cultural network is that it is driven from the bottom up and comes from the cadets themselves. Its effect is also temporary as no cadet is there longer than four years and most are there for just two years. Cadets bring their past military experiences (Army, Air Force, Marine, Navy; active-duty, National Guard, reserves; deployed, non-deployed; etc.) and, as students on campus, serve as a conduit for cultural trends and the ideology of their generation. The idea that each generation brings its own culture, impacting the Army in ways not understood by older generations, is taken up in Wong's monograph, *Generations Apart: Xers and Boomers in the Officer Corps* (Publications & Production Office, 2000). Though the research was meant to inform DoD officials of strategies to retain lieutenants and captains Wong raises an interesting point when he argues that young officers will leave the Army if their values and beliefs are too much at odds with those of senior leadership and policy makers. This is important to keep in mind when one considers how cadets process information about foreign cultures (does culture mean the same thing to senior leaders as it does to junior officers?). Wong's work supports this thesis' argument: to be successful culture training must be tailored to the culture of those who would use it.

The Need for Anthropology

The need for cultural expertise in the military has reached something like a crisis point. However, viable solutions are hard to come by and tougher to put in effect. In an article for the military trade journal *Field Artillery* entitled, *Developing Cultural Understanding in Stability Operations: A Three-Step Process* (2007), Lt. Col. Prisco R. Hernandez (ARNG) writes about the need for cultural understanding. He argues that this is best achieved through a critical reading of history and culture, mastering language skills, and the practical application of skill based content in a “total immersion” environment. I do not fault his assertion that the Soldier so trained “will be well on his way to cultural understanding” (2007:9) though I do disagree about his method. His suggestion that language skills and the practical application of cultural and linguistic knowledge has to be or is best performed in a total immersion environment is clearly an appeal to upper echelon bureaucrats and policy makers who have already invested in these kinds of environments. Further, Lt. Col. Hernandez’s statement, “knowledge of history and basic cultural understanding are, conceptually, the easiest to acquire” (2007:6) backed by his recommendation that the student must gain perspective by finding “the *best* books by prominent historians that offer contrasting views of the subject” [emphasis added] and “a translation of a *good* history written by a historian from that culture” [emphasis added] begs the question, what is *best* and *good*? Because the reader does not know who the “student” is I will assume the author is referring to somebody who is well educated enough that he or she may be able to discern between *best* and *good*, especially in relation to a culture and history that they are unfamiliar with. The “student” here is probably a senior officer, namely because the author refers to a schooling process that is no less than one year long and would allow the Soldier to

“operate with considerable independence from an interpreter and gain stature with leaders” (9), and because it was vetted by the Command and General Staff College (CGSC) and the Battle Command Training Center (BCTP), both prestigious schools for senior officers. The part of Lt. Col. Hernandez’s argument that most interests us here is that he believes a significant cultural shift in military thinking is necessary to meet the demands of the contemporary operating environment.

Lt. Col. Brett G. Lewis (U.S. Army) also recognizes the difficulty in developing cultural knowledge in Soldiers. In a research project for the U.S. Army War College (USAWC) entitled, *Developing Soldier Cultural Competency* (2006), the author argues for widespread cultural education for all Soldiers regardless of rank or station. Though he credits the Army for their attempts to address cultural knowledge, especially through online language programs (Rosetta Stone) and a variety of immersive training exercises, Lt. Col. Lewis criticizes the decentralized nature of culture awareness training. He describes, “the effectiveness of current cultural training across the U.S. Army is mixed at best, providing Soldiers a ‘tourist’ level of understanding which does not adequately prepare them to be culturally competent and effective” (2006:3). Furthermore, he adds

Cross-cultural training is not simply a briefing of general or anecdotal features of a specific culture. While many Soldiers prefer country culture specific training to be reduced to a simple checklist, basic phrases, generalized demographic facts, within a visual presentation, cross-cultural training is [more] focused on learning about one’s internal cultural biases than understanding the culture of others (2006:8).

Lt. Col. Lewis argues that Soldiers who understand how their cultural influences’ impact their thoughts and actions will be more able and willing to recognize similar

processes in other people. This is an important element in developing cultural competency and self-awareness, both of which can reduce stress and anxiety while deployed and enables effective communication across cultures. The author argues that in order to achieve this goal “Soldiers need an institutionalized culture education program, which is critical in developing and maintaining cultural competency, to support expeditionary deployments in the future” (2006:11). He sees the current professional military education (PME) system (which includes Basic Training and all Army schools), including commissioning sources like ROTC, as the “perfect framework to develop cultural competency across the force.” Ultimately, his concept is sound though it does beg the questions, what will be taught and who will be teaching it? To best answer these questions it is necessary to know something about the proposed target audience.

The road to cultural adaptability for military personnel is long and, as Lt. Col. Lewis suggests, may require not so much a new vehicle but a different path altogether. Not everybody can see the merits of such an approach, possibly because it would require at the very least, important and significant changes to existing doctrine. A November 2006 essay entitled, *Military Cultural Awareness: From Anthropology to Application*, written by John W. Jandora for Landpower Essay (An Institute of Land Warfare Publication) advocates, like so many recent articles, for improved cultural awareness inside the military. He describes the components of a target (predominantly Arab) culture that impact operations and details how they need to be addressed in order to satisfy the requirements of commanders and leaders. However, unlike other authors, Jandora gives his readers a list of “behavioral ‘dos and don’ts’” as “precautions to respect Islam” (2006:3). Normative “cheat sheets” that treat Middle Eastern *cultures* as a single

culture of Islam (with few distinctions noted for the different sects) are not new; though, they are rarely linked to the future of cultural awareness training and education. It is unsurprising to find that the author follows this method for transmitting cultural knowledge to its logical conclusion when he recommends “reducing” culture down to a series of “special ‘products’” that take the form of military handbooks and appendices to existing doctrine and field manuals (2006:6). Furthermore, Jandora’s presentation is essentially a normative list of “fundamental cultural differences” (2006:4) that reduces “American” and “Arab” culture to a set of overly simplified contrasting values. The list looks like this:

<u>American</u> Action-oriented	<u>Arab</u> Word-oriented
Balanced in self-exertion	Bipolar in self-exertion
Casual interpretation of phenom.	Atomistic interpretation of phenom.
Rationalist in explanation	Allegoric in explanation
Materialist outlook (possessions matter)	Spiritualist outlook (all belongs to God)
Women are liberated	Women are shielded
Public-good mindset	Clan-interest mindset
Openly debate significant issues	Conceal issues (to “save face”)
Distinction between war and negotiation	Interplay of war and negotiation
Shock effect is best combat method	Stand-off is best combat method

Not only reductionistic exercises like this point to how little the military understands culture difference. Efforts like this can also damage the already fragile dialogue that exists between social scientists and the military. Further, the practice of reducing cultures to an “us versus them” lists is counterproductive to staff cultural understanding and adaptability because it can lead to stereotyped reaction to culturally diverse situations instead of proactive, critical thinking.

It is exactly this type of naive scholarship that worries Patrick Porter, author of the article *Good Anthropology, Bad History: The Cultural Turn in Studying War* (Parameters, Summer 2007). He characterizes work like Janadora’s as presenting “an overly determinist view of the tangled relationship between war and culture...[that] paradoxically, while it aims to encourage greater sensitivity to the nuances that differentiate cultures, it actually encourages a crude view of ancient and fixed ways of war. It risks replacing strategy with stereotypes” (2007:46). Porter argues that the need to take a “cultural turn,” an anthropological approach to military operations, has been given strength by recent American failures. This has led to debates over the value of universal principles of strategy, and represents perhaps “a wider backlash against the universalism of the Bush Administration’s attempt to remake the world in America’s image” (2007:48). This cultural turn, as the Army understands it, is encapsulated in the Army’s new counterinsurgency field manual, DoD policies and programs. It can also be seen in some of the latest military history books. Porter warns against the dangers of oversimplifying culture and thus seeing it as the root of, and solution to, conflicts around the world. This is because culture is “historically remade and contested,” a fact not often apparently conveyed to government officials and senior military leadership. Even what

anthropologists provide policymakers appears to be cut out of the same cloth. Ultimately, “cultural determinism [of the kind Janadora advocates] sees what it wants to see in history, making facts fit a theory to confirm its urgent contemporary agenda” (2007:56). It is with great care and critical analysis that future research in culture related to the military must proceed. What is required is a better understanding of culture, one that can be fomented throughout a Soldier’s and officer’s career and development. Understanding how new Soldiers and cadets think about culture is a better method of communicating meaningful knowledge because it takes into account how they acquire skills and knowledge in the Army, chiefly through teamwork and hands-on experience.

Action

According to Gail McGinn, Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Plans and DoD Senior Language Authority, in her keynote remarks at the 2007 Michigan World Language Association Conference (Lansing, MI) she talked about the Department of Defense’s focus on the “development of regional and cultural capabilities.” In light of the need for cultural illiteracy faced by deployed military personnel she adds, “it is our responsibility to ensure they have the appropriate language and cultural competencies to operate and survive in the global community...we are exercising this responsibility with a shift in strategy that elevates language and cultural proficiency...” This is the core concept of the Defense Language Transformation Roadmap (published in February 2005), which encompassed the operational needs of the commander and planner and reviewed current doctrine and policies. Additionally, in an effort to expand culture and language learning opportunities for future officers the DoD made language study

mandatory for the Service Academies and started the “ROTC Language and Culture Project,” a pilot program that has funded initiatives at four universities since 2006. McGinn said, “the project seeks to develop and test innovative approaches to affording ROTC cadets a vital opportunity to engage in studies that will better prepare them to address the global national security challenges of the twenty-first century” and she hopes that colleges and universities will respond by offering courses that meet these demands. Other government-sponsored programs addressing culture and language skills for civilians and military personnel include: Mobile Training Teams from the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLI) that prepares Americans for deployment, the National Security Language Initiative (NSLI) and its National Security Education Program (NSEP) which of all are designed to “increase the number of Americans learning critical need foreign languages.” There is also the National Language Flagship Program that is currently “developing model pipelines of K-12 students with higher levels of language proficiency into our universities.” The programs augment the previously established Basic Military Language Course (BMLC) at the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center (USAJFKSWC), the Center for Advanced Study of Language (CASL), and Centers of Excellence that “oversee and standardize training and impart essential and mission-targeted cultural training to their members” (2).

As extensive as these government programs appear to be, these language and culture training programs are designed to reach military personnel at various points in their career, especially at the earliest stages. This is significant because it allows the individual to progressively build up a skill set over time rather than learning in short,

staccato bursts separated by several months or years. This is more typical of how the military educates but less certain to build long-term competence in cultural understanding. The fact that the Service Academies and ROTC programs are being targeted as preferred locations neatly coincides with the arguments of Lt. Col. Hernandez and Lt. Col Lewis who both believe an environment and established structure that provides scholarly training is best for educating future officers about language and culture. Ball State ROTC cadets also adamantly support culture training during this phase of their military education and have expressed the desire for much more than they received. However, this research suggests that for the training to be most effective it needs to take into account the perceptions of the culture cadets bring with them- not just the culture of potential adversaries but their own as well. This is an area, the second, that has not received the attention it deserves. It also must be noted that although the U.S. government heavily endorses “language training” this tends to be equated with “culture training” thereby making the assumption that they are one and the same. This confusion could have long-term consequences for the Army’s attempt to teach staff cultural literacy.

One method of cultural training for military personnel involves using video games. The technique for using interactive computer systems to teach Soldiers and Marines verbal and non-verbal language is discussed in an article for National Geographic News written by Stefan Lovgren called, *Video Games Help U.S. Soldiers Learn Arab Language, Culture* (<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/pf/42303726.html>, accessed 19 October 2007). The computer engine behind the games, designed by Hannes Hogni Vilhjalmsen, a research scientist with the Information Sciences Institute at UCLA, is intended to

replicate foreign environments like Iraq and Afghanistan. The objective of the game is to enable Soldiers and Marines to communicate face-to-face with the local people using spoken words and unspoken gestures while responding to various non-verbal behavioral cues of the villagers. If the user is successful he or she will then move on to the next training level. The training system may seem to have a number of weaknesses, but it was tested by cadets at West Point in 2003 and is now being used by officers at the Expeditionary Warfare School at Camp Pendleton in California.

Planning and conducting a well-researched and validated educational program is one facet of improving cultural awareness within the U.S. military. Another facet involves the use of Human Terrain Teams. As discussed by David Rohde in an October 5, 2007 New York Times article entitled, *Army Enlists Anthropology in War Zones*, Human Terrain Teams are “an experimental Pentagon program that assigns anthropologists and other social scientists to American combat units in Afghanistan and Iraq” (1). These teams, and the anthropologists’ involvement, have been highly praised by military officials as well as categorically denounced by some observers who find the concept unconscionable. According to Rohde, anthropologists have helped Soldiers understand the subtleties of cross-cultural communication and in some cases reduced combat operations by as much as 60 percent. Regardless of public sentiment, Human Terrain Teams have become a part of American military plans to engage culture-related problems with as many different resources as possible. Where building cultural competency in Soldiers takes time, the employment of academics brings an anthropological perspective to a situation long without scholarly input. This raises an important but neglected set of issues about the dissemination of scholarly knowledge into

the military. For example, how can the Army make optimal use of the best available data social scientists have on American culture and that of our opponents- potential and otherwise?

Debate

Since the U.S. government began emphasizing cultural competency its policy, doctrine, and training there has been no shortage of criticism from academics. Some of it comes in the form of skeptical newspaper articles reporting anthropologist's involvement with the U.S. Army Human Terrain System (HTS) (*U.S. Army enlists anthropologists*, Kambiz Fattahi, accessed 12 May 2008). Some articles take exception to the covert CIA sponsored social science programs of the 1960s and 70s, especially with regards to purported issues of torture and interrogation (*Buying a piece of anthropology, Part 1: Human Ecology and unwitting anthropological research for the CIA*, David H. Price, 2007); implying that the potential for a similar co-option of research exists today and that CIA oversight of these military activities is imminent. Some authors are ideologically and politically opposed to any relationship whatsoever between the discipline of anthropology and the U.S. government. This raises the question of what responsibilities scholars have to make certain that this country's military works off the basis of the strong rather than weak scientific knowledge. This is not a new issue of course, but looking back at how this issue has been handled in the past can put some of today's polemics into perspective.

The conflict between anthropology and the military has a long history and includes such names as Franz Boas, Gregory Bateson, Margaret Mead, and Carelton

Coon to name a few. However its contemporary origins begin during World War II when anthropologists were actively employed for the U.S. war effort in Europe, Asia, and the Pacific. Since many of those anthropologists were involved in clandestine operations their work became classified, a highly debated issue that resonates even today. Of the limited amount of research that was ultimately declassified and published none was more influential than Ruth Benedict's, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword* (1967). This book, though valuable on several levels, revealed the extent to which an anthropologist can influence U.S. foreign policy and have a deep impact on the cultural continuity of a war-devastated country. Unfortunately the spirit of cooperation between anthropology and government, relations soured with the CIA's failed implementation of Project Camelot in 1964; a DoD venture to develop a social systems model that would allow the government to predict and influence significant factors in social change, specifically within developing nations. The backlash this project caused within the discipline of anthropology has reverberated across a generation of academic writing concerning military affairs. This is most evident in the positions of David Price, Hugh Gusterson, and Roberto Gonzalez that argue against U.S. military involvement in Afghanistan and Iraq, calling anthropological contributions a prostitution of the discipline and criticizing the men and women who pass on information that will be used for military activities. This viewpoint is tempered in articles like Amahl Bishara's *Anthropologists Must Enter the News About the Middle East and Expand Its Limits* (2007) and Montgomery McFate's *The Military Utility of Understanding Adversary Culture* (2005). The last two pieces advocate for anthropological participation in military matters as a means to mitigate further misconception of foreign culture and its negative impact on civilians.

Roberto J. Gonzalez has written several papers expressing his opposition to any link between the military and anthropology. His article, *Towards mercenary anthropology? The new U.S. Army counterinsurgency manual FM 3-24 and the military-anthropology complex* (Anthropology Today, June 2007) is a two-part criticism of recent Army efforts. Gonzalez criticizes the U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual, especially anthropologists and its co-authors David Kilcullen and Montgomery McFate. In addition to working with the Bush administration, Kilcullen is also criticized for not crediting T.E. Lawrence's 1917 work in "Twenty-seven articles (written for *Arab Bulletin*). Gonzalez, accuses McFate with some justification, of providing the Army with an antiquated, structural-functionalist interpretation of culture (2007:15). McFate seems to rely on weak forms of network analysis and readings of opponents culture that seem as suspect as those that originated from the WWII "culture at a distance" project (*Manipulating the Architecture of Cultural Control*, Journal of Information Warfare, 2005c). Gonzalez also condemns the "military-anthropology complex" as an unethical alliance of big-money contractors, social scientists, and mass media that is personified by the Pentagon project Human Terrain System. He argues that "adversary culture," a concept that informs the Human Terrain System project, is unclearly defined, but remains a reference point for "soldier-scholars" because the concept provides "ideological justifications for military occupation" (2007:18). Ultimately, he concludes that anthropologists who advise counterinsurgency work run the risk of harming those they study and doing lasting damage to the discipline because anthropologists could eventually be equated with U.S. government agents.

In another article, "*Human terrain: Past, present and future applications*" (Anthropology Today, February 2008), Gonzalez criticizes the Human Terrain System. Though he describes many of the operational characteristics of the HTS (providing commanders with cultural information) Gonzalez links ethnographic information with intelligence gathering and disparages the Army for not collecting data concerning the validity and operability of the HTS and the Human Terrain Teams. The author raises good points but they are obscured by his attacks on the military and anybody who contributes to the occupation in Iraq. Specifically, he argues that the HTS is an "espionage programme" with historical ties to Vietnam War-era counterinsurgency projects like the Civil Operations Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS) and the Phoenix Program. This is not supported by any evidence but is based on the fact that commanders are not willing to share details about ongoing military operations. Here Gonzalez only demonstrates his naivety for how the military works. Further, his demands for information show a disregard for the safety of those involved in ongoing military operations. Those who support the Human Terrain Project reply that "given that HTS is a new project, it is not possible to have mature outcome evaluation data at this stage" and that both Gonzalez and the DoD will have to wait for a complete assessment (2008:27). This begs the question because DoD or some neutral agency should be conducting some preliminary form of evaluation while HTS continues to operate in the field.

In an article written for the Annual Review of Anthropology (2007), *Anthropology and Militarism*, Hugh Gusterson describes the discipline's relationship with the military and warfare. He discusses the nature of war, the human predilection

towards violence, and the scholastic attempts to study warfare in its natural environment, whether that is the South American jungles of the 1960s and 70s, war-torn Europe during the first half of the 20th century, or the halls of academia. He describes numerous conflicts from around the globe and the anthropological quest for their better understanding. Unfortunately Gusterson does not acknowledge there has been little scholarly study devoted to America's involvement in different kinds of warfare. How much has been written, for example, on Brigadier General Jack Pershing's role in counterinsurgency in early 20th century Philippines? Ultimately, Gusterson concludes that there is a recent trend in the post- 9/11 world for anthropologists to debate "the merits of military anthropology versus critical ethnography of the military" (2007:155).

Though there are several other published criticisms of the Human Terrain System and other social science research carried out for the Department of Defense the papers written by Gonzalez and Gusterson exemplify the arguments found in these other articles. Some of the issues that have been raised concerning anthropologists employed by the U.S. government include, but are not limited to "weaponizing culture." This refers to a variety of kinds of unethical research, which among other things, threatens to jeopardize future ethnography and puts informants at risk. There is also concern that research generated for the military will become classified and therefore not accessible to the academic community. Additionally, the Commission for the Engagement of Anthropology with the U.S. Security and Intelligence Communities (CEAUSSIC), a panel of anthropologists that investigated the nature of the Human Terrain System for the American Anthropological Association (AAA), concluded their investigation stating, "AAA expresses disapproval of the HTS Program." This conclusion was based on the

panel's findings, the AAA Code of Ethics, and the assumption that anthropologists in HTS would not be able to distinguish themselves from military personnel and informants would not be able to provide "meaningful informed and voluntary consent."

On the other side of the debate is Montgomery McFate. McFate is not only a strong supporter of educating the military, she is also co-author of chapter three of the Counterinsurgency Field Manual and a Social Science Advisor to the DoD. Where the military has been criticized for its insensitivity towards other cultures McFate realized the "cultural knowledge gap has a simple cause- the almost total absence of anthropology within the national-security establishment" (2005a) and she endeavored to correct that deficiency herself. It is striking to note, however, that for whatever reason she has been unable to enlist the support of many senior practitioners of anthropology. Like Gusterson's *Anthropology and Militarism*, McFate's article *Anthropology and Counterinsurgency* also describes the role of culture and anthropologists have played in conflicts around the world. The notable difference is that where Gusterson is focused on the negative impact of militarism McFate chooses examples of anthropologists helping the military understand the cultural environment (with no exploitation or putting indigenous populations at risk) or instances that proved disastrous when cultural knowledge was not brought into play. Her article documents a historically complex relationship between anthropology and the military, one fraught with both success as well as failure, and not all of it characterized by the CIA domination.

In another article, *The Military Utility of Understanding Adversary Culture* (2005b), McFate argues the need for cultural awareness programs through a case study of the early years of the Iraq War. Though this article was originally intended to generate

support for military-wide cultural awareness programs (it is essentially a request for funding such a program) McFate does capture the need for appropriate cultural understanding when she says, “misunderstanding culture at a strategic level can produce policies that exacerbate an insurgency; a lack of cultural knowledge at an operational level can lead to negative public opinion; and ignorance of the culture at a tactical level endangers both civilians and troops” (2005b:43-44). She points to a misunderstanding of “physical culture and local symbols” that resulted from inadequate training and describes examples of how misunderstood gestures (for both Iraqis and Americans) had fatal consequences. Nevertheless it is an open question whether the kind of anthropology McFate practices the models of culture she argues for will have the effect she wants it to have. It is also striking that there seems to be so far at least no assessment of the weaknesses and strengths of the HTS approach by objective reviewers. There are alternative approaches; for example, the work Persson and Nyce (*Intuitive Tools? Design Lessons from the Military Intelligence Community*, 2007a; *The Design of Appropriate Tools and Resources for the Intelligence Community*, 2007b) have been carrying out on innovation, tradition, and technology in the military intelligence function in Swedish forces. Johnston’s analysis of CIA institutions and practices is also worth noting (*The Culture of Analytic Tradecraft*, 2005). Then there is the work Scott Atran (“Who Becomes a Terrorist Today?,” 2008) has done on terrorists that has led to a better understanding of how terrorists are recruited, how terrorists’ networks operate and what informs and precipitates the kinds of acts of violence they carry out.

It is not hard not to argue that the U.S. military needs cultural competence at every level of its infrastructure. However, how to generate and provide that knowledge is

being intensely debated in academia, blogs, military and anthropology journals, quarterlies, and annuals, government briefings, and ad hoc commissions. McFate and other proponents of an anthropologically educated military accuse anthropologists like Gonzalez and Price of polarizing the discipline during a time when anthropologists should make meaningful, positive contributions that help save lives (both military and civilian). She argues that the “theme of ownership and control is at the heart of recent AAA resolutions” (2007) and that nobody should own anthropology. McFate adds, “the view that the military should remain ignorant of anthropology is a truly alarming perspective for professional educators.” And then McFate asks, “is the use of anthropological knowledge by the national security community less ethical than the censorship and control of such knowledge by academic anthropologists who claim to believe in truth and freedom?” (2007). This finesses the perhaps more important question of whether McFate’s understanding of the kinds of anthropology the military requires is correct.

RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

“You’ve got to leave home at home in a lot of ways and leave your problems from home at home and complete the mission. That’s what the Army stands on, mission first. You complete the mission and leave everything else at home.” - Ball State cadet

Cadet Life- First Impressions

It is 0600 and I am half asleep, waiting for the first formation of the school year and my first as a ROTC cadet. I have not yet met any of the cadets and I am a little nervous. I don’t like being the new guy. Despite talking with several officers and NCOs at Fort Bragg I have no idea what to expect. I know the Reserve Officer Training Corps is a college and university based commissioning program. And I know that at the end of my two years at Ball State University I would be a Second Lieutenant. The Professor of Military Science (PMS) told me days earlier that the program was physically challenging and mentally demanding, designed to produce quality leaders and nothing less. However, everybody else in the Army tells me that ROTC is a place where students go to “play Soldier.”

Inside the cadet lounge, a rectangular room that contains a television, two couches, a long table surrounded by chairs, lockers, and some computers, young men and women wearing gray Army t-shirts and black shorts slowly filter in before the mandatory 0630 formation. ESPN is on and the cadets that arrive first slouch in the comfortable seats that surround the TV in the corner. The MSIV’s, the senior cadets in their last year of ROTC, gather in groups of two to four, long lost comrades recounting their summer

exploits at the Leadership Development Assessment Course, more popularly known as LDAC (el-dak). Some cadets are sleepily discussing the upcoming football season while others move among the scattered knots, wide-eyed zombies looking for a clue about what they are supposed to be doing. I was one of those zombies casually eavesdropping on bits of conversation, searching for the brains that would direct the rest of us. Unlike the other cadet neophytes, the MSI and MSII underclassmen who wore their newness like a fur coat at a PETA rally, I affected the disinterested, annoyed-to-be-awake-and-doing-the-Army-thing look that is standard issue for the Army units I was familiar with. As I was told later, “nobody knew who you were but you just looked like you belonged.”

As the minute hand of the clock marched to 0625 I thought to myself, “so much for the ‘ten minutes prior to’ rule- an Army axiom for being on time. However, rather than give into the mounting anxiety surrounding my impending lateness I waited. After all, if we were all late how much trouble could we get into? Perhaps it was anthropological instinct not to impose my values on another culture, to do as they did, to be the unobtrusive participant observer. Whatever the case, those who had been cadets the previous year picked up folded blue mats (to do sit-ups on) from under a countertop and began to trickle upstairs to the gymnasium where we would form up and conduct a portion of our physical training (PT). A senior cadet barked, “let’s go” and the rest of the us numbly followed.

The yellow lights of Ball Gym glinted on the freshly waxed floors as roughly three-dozen cadets fell into one large formation. The MSIV’s, as cadet officers (vs. the rest of the battalion who were considered to be cadet NCOs), lined up behind the formation as they would when they eventually pinned on the gold bar of a Second

Lieutenant. A “high speed” MSIII faced the formation and called the group to attention. I snapped to, though I noticed most cadets did so less enthusiastically.

The MSIII in control of the formation was a clean-shaven male who wore the high-and-tight hairstyle common to most of the Army. He was neither tall nor noticeably muscular, but he was wiry and the manner in which he addressed the assembled cadets told me that had done this many times before. He introduced himself as the Cadet Sergeant Major (the highest “enlisted” rank for a cadet) and informed us that in the coming weeks we would actually be divided into separate company’s for PT and administrative purposes and that today’s workout would be light. That being said he intoned the commands for an extended rectangular formation, the Army method for uniformly spreading out a formation so they have enough room to stretch and exercise without running into each other.

“Atten-tion.” Since the Cadet Sergeant Major never gave the command “at ease” most of us were already in this position, though clearly not everybody.

“Extend to the left, march.” Apparently, only about half of the cadets expected this as the mass of gray and black lurched and stumbled sideways, arms extended at the shoulder. The formation stopped moving when the person furthest left reached a double arm interval from the person on his right.

“Arms downward, move.” Everyone dropped their arms, slapping the sides of their nylon shorts.

“Left, face.” The cadets all pivot on the ball of the right foot though far from being in unison.

“Extend to the left, march.” Everybody is awake now.

“Arms downward, move.” Slap!

“Right, face.” Three cadets turn in the wrong direction and, slightly red-faced, hastily perform two right face movements so that they are facing the same direction as everybody else.

“From front to rear, count off.” The people standing in the first rank, the *de facto* first squad, unenthusiastically yell “one!” The second squad, no better than the first, yells, “two!” The third squad, a little bit louder, yells, “three!” And the fourth squad, composed of the senior cadets, attempts to compensate for the lackluster motivation of the battalion and scream, “four!” The Cadet Sergeant Major seemed to be unfazed by the start to this morning or the somewhat bemused expressions on the faces of ROTC cadre standing far behind the cadet formation.

“Even numbers to the left, uncover.” Everybody in the even numbered squads takes one step to the left so that they are standing in between the people in front of them but not directly behind them. Now that the imminent threat of cadet collision has been temporarily avoided the process of rotating, stretching, and exercising begins.

In the following weeks the 12 MSIII cadets would take turns leading those who showed up for the mandatory PT sessions three times a week. While the numbers of MSIII and MSIV cadets remain fairly consistent the number of MSI and MSII cadets who actually attend PT fluctuates with the weather and the academic calendar. The rule is that if a cadet is contracted, if they agreed to serve as an officer in the U.S. Army after graduation, then PT is mandatory. To the dismay of the cadre, cadets who are not contracted come and go as they please. If it is raining particularly hard or they have

midterms to study for or they are too hung-over, they just do not show up. ROTC programs across the country do not require a commitment from the freshmen and sophomores so those students who want to experience the Army life, for however long that may be, are free to come and go as they please. However, if the cadre responsible for recruitment and retention has students who are serious about making the Army a career then they work diligently to sign them to a contract as quickly as possible. A contract in the Army usually stipulates four years of service in the National Guard, the Army Reserve, or on active-duty. In return a student usually receives a full scholarship at a university. If a contracted cadet cannot achieve the minimum required score to pass the Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT) they are put on probation and, in rare cases (at BSU at least), kicked out of the program. In order to be contracted a cadet has to pass the APFT.

PT is perhaps the most basic element of Army life. The fact that it is the first thing a cadet (as well as everybody else in the Army) does every morning symbolizes the Army's philosophy towards, and commitment to, physical fitness. This is because physical fitness equals mission readiness. If a cadet is not disciplined and motivated enough to attend PT three days a week then they are usually not fit to serve in the Army. By his or her attendance a BSU cadet demonstrates their dedication to the program, a symbol of their commitment to the U.S. Army and the would-be Soldiers under their command. For the Ball State ROTC program a cadet's PT score (points awarded for the number of pushups and sit-ups completed in two minutes and two-mile timed run) heavily influences the cadre's perception of their leadership capabilities (beyond commitment and dedication). The primary reason for this is because ROTC, like the

larger Army, subscribes to the idea that a leader must lead in all things. In short, a leader should be a “PT stud,” they should be more intelligent (hence all officers need a four-year degree), and should work longer and harder than any Soldier under their command. Although the idea that an officer should work more than anybody else appears to be at odds with the views of junior officers (Wong, 2000) and cadets alike. The idea of “being the best,” specifically in PT, is strongly encouraged. This is especially critical at LDAC where a cadet’s APFT score often correlates with their overall camp evaluation. In other words, a cadet who scores a 290 on their APFT (out of a possible 300 points) and screws up everything else (obstacle courses, patrolling lanes, etc.) will typically receive a better review than the cadet who scores a 220 on their APFT and performs satisfactorily on all other tasks. Many cadets take exception to this unwritten policy. As one female tells me, “just because you’re good at land nav[igation] or you’re good at PT doesn’t make you a good leader.” Be that as it may and despite her protests it is generally accepted, however begrudgingly, that this is the way things work in ROTC.

Like with most organizations, a number of paradoxes exist within the ROTC PT structure. First, in an organization that has very specific rules and regulations for every aspect of its existence, including corresponding punishments for infractions, it is almost impossible to mess up PT. The worst thing a cadet can do is show up late, however, to show up at all is generally considered a plus. Contracted cadets who are absent from PT on multiple occasions may receive a negative spot report or counseling statement and are sometimes required to attend a make-up PT session on Saturday morning. PT is stressed as one of the most important factors in a cadet’s life, yet every year mandatory attendance fluctuates and consequences are weak enough to have little or no effect on the situation.

Perhaps this is part of a self-discovery process by which no individual other than the cadet can discover if they are suited to the Army life for not other explanation was discovered. Second, despite an environment that stresses teamwork as a means to succeed in all endeavors, PT is the only ROTC activity that necessarily focuses on the individual; a fact made all the more poignant because of its importance to a cadet's evaluation, both at school and LDAC. An individual's participation and success within in the group is symbolic of an officer's determination and fortitude, his or her will to succeed. If a cadet cannot push himself hard in front of his peers than how will he be able to in front of those he must lead in all things? Though a cadet is drilled on the value of being a team player, in practice, this is never formally assessed, has no effect on progress reports, and therefore could be assumed to be unimportant. Consequently, stressing individual performance is a method of getting favorably noticed, carries over to LDAC and presumably, into an officer's career. A cadet who deliberately and repeatedly eschews the team concept in favor of their own agenda is commonly referred to as a "spotlight ranger," a "bravo foxtrot," or a "blue falcon"- all terms that mean, "buddy fucker." Being on time and in the right uniform is an excellent start for a cadet. Show some enthusiasm, faked or otherwise, and moderate progress in physical training and any cadet can succeed in the Ball State ROTC program. This facile approach is lauded while academic achievement, something the Army greatly needs, is paid little attention to outside. After all, for a cadet to remain in the program all he or she has to do is receive passing grades. This eerily reflects the situation U.S. military forces finds itself with the Global War On Terror where physical force can not resolve the conflict because it rests more on strategy and intelligence than anything else.

PT was an hour long, just like every other session, but it was the only ROTC related thing I had to do that day. The next day, however, I had my first military science class- blocks of instruction typically about Army fundamentals like military courtesies, drill and ceremony, map reading, battle drills, and operations orders (OPORDERS or OPORD's). As I walk up to Ball Gym, the building that houses two ROTC classrooms, administrative offices, cadet lounge, and the basketball/volleyball court we work out on three days a week, I wonder what I am in for. Once again I think back to some of the advice I received prior to leaving Fort Bragg. I remember the ROTC recruiter who helped me put in the paperwork that would get me accepted to the program tell me, "the classes will be long and boring because you've done everything countless times, but don't fall asleep and let your classmates get as much experience as they can." In other words, be polite, supportive, and unobtrusive.

I head down to the cadet lounge, the inevitable way station for all ROTC students in transition. This afternoon there is more of a sense of purpose though I am not feeling it. Dressed in heavily starched BDU's and surrounded by other similarly dressed cadets I quickly feel the effects of the windowless, basement confines. By the looks of it other people are feeling the stuffiness too. Cadets are littered around the room talking with each other, checking email on department computers and personal laptops, or signing out mandatory equipment from the supply technician. And of course a knot of students sequesters themselves in front of the ever-glowing television.

I mill around exchanging pleasantries and looking at uniform nametapes and checking for combat patches or skill badges (patches represent units and badges represent

things done). I hate sizing up other Soldiers like that, but this is an inescapable fact of Army culture and everybody does it, whether they realize it or not, even cadets. Patches worn on the right shoulder signify combat service and skill badges, worn on the left breast, publicize special schools the individual attended. These badges could also be awarded for being in a firefight, IED explosion, or some other life-threatening situation. The most common badges are for airborne school and air assault school, but there are few of these displayed here. Tabs, representing the hardest schools in the Army (Special Forces, Ranger, Sapper are the most “common”) are worn above the unit patch on the left shoulder are rare in the “Big Army.” These are not found amongst any student or cadre member (though a Master Sergeant who later came to the program as the senior NCO wore both the coveted Special Forces and Ranger tabs).

I meet a few of my classmates and we strike up idle banter, eyes canvassing each other’s uniforms, haircuts, and boots. Aside from badges, patches, and tabs the actual wear and appearance of the uniform can reveal a lot about somebody. Though there are strict guidelines (AR 670-1) that are intended to govern this, in practice there are subtle variations employed by some Soldiers to flaunt the rules and possibly express some sense of individualism. For example, some blouse their boots (tying the pants around the outside of the boot) a little lower than regulation. Some people wear their sideburns to maximum length while others shave their head bald. The most common variation is how people wear their patrol caps (regulation, blocked, “ranger rolled,” caved-in, extreme curves on the bill, tipped back off the forehead) or berets (not worn by ROTC cadets). Before the recent uniform change when BDU’s (the woodland camouflaged Battle Dress Uniform was adopted in the 1980s replacing the olive drab uniforms worn during the

Vietnam era) were replaced by ACU's (the Army Combat Uniform has a digital pattern and is intended to be worn in all environments, including desert, jungle, and urban terrains). It was mandatory for cadets to wear BDU's at LDAC prior to 2008. Before 2008 a Soldier could be judged by how much starch was in their uniform, how sun-faded their uniform was, or by how much shine their black boots had. Today it is a little more difficult with uniforms that do not require starching or pressing and brown desert boots that do not need polish, but some signs of individuality still do exist among the sameness.

Eventually the MSIII cadets and I head outside for our pre-class formation. On some days we would practice drill and ceremony, moving people in and around the formation and marching around the Quad, but today was more a chance for the MSIV's to inform us of their expectations. The August sun was directly overhead and a feeble wind blew out of the south. Sweat started to soak my undershirt and pool in my boots courtesy the knee-high wool socks. While we waited for the senior cadets I casually surveyed the other students.

At Ball State, and to some extent LDAC, there are six basic personality types or roles independent of an active-duty, reservist, or National Guard affiliation. These are *the alpha*, *the misfit*, *the administrator*, *the newbie*, *the veteran*, and *the drifter*. These cadets can be either male or female and prior service personnel can assume any of the roles other than the newbie. Additionally, cadets can be, and often are a combination of these personas.

Brian, the cadet who led the battalion in PT yesterday, was standing at the head of the formation. His BDU's were faded and starched and his boots had worn heels and a high shine. Though he did not sport a combat patch he did have a blackened (subdued)

set of airborne wings pinned above the U.S. Army tape on his left breast pocket. Since the wings were not sewn on I knew he had not served with a regular airborne unit (pinned on rank or badges were not allowed when parachuting because they could interfere with the operation of the equipment) but I did have him pegged for an infantryman.

Brian is a National Guardsman with three years of service and had obtained the rank of Sergeant before joining the ROTC program at Ball State in 2005. Like the majority of cadets in Cardinal Battalion he splits his time between his Guard unit and ROTC. Brian is an alpha type personality. He is headstrong, super competitive- especially in sports, actively seeks leadership positions, and has natural inclination towards all things military. He is confident and competent, has passing grades but consistently ranks as the best in PT. Brian is the poster child for BSU ROTC and the entire cadre love him. There are few alpha type personalities at Ball State, a fact possibly fostered by Ball State's more relaxed and less-competitive environment when compared with other colleges and universities. As Amy put it,

[At] Ball State we have a lot more of a laid back environment. I think the students tend to be a lot more laid back in their training. At LDAC you always have those people- the alpha male stereotypes. I don't feel that we have a many of those here at Ball State as what we had at LDAC.

As a counterpoint to Brian's *cadetness* was Kelly's misfit behavior. She was at the end of the second squad; two cadets down from me, bitching up a storm. It did not seem to me that she was angry about anything or anyone in particular, but she was slinging expletives like a longshoreman. As I was to find out later, that is how Kelly almost always spoke to others. She is short, slightly overweight, and her blonde hair was

starting to come away from the knot on the back of her neck. Every semester she struggles to make passing grades and she has never passed an APFT. Kelly is not a bad person; she is just not cut out for the Army. Fortunately for her, somebody on the ROTC staff realizes this and she is soon separated from the program.

Standing in the first squad leader's position Hal is the model administrator. Everything about his uniform, boots, and haircut are regulation. His patrol cap is worn with the bottom edges parallel to the ground and is not folded, bent, creased, or rolled in any distinct fashion. Though Hal is the A Company Cadet First Sergeant during PT and off-campus training exercises he is quiet and unassuming in a manner that betrays his primary MOS as an infantryman. He takes charge when he needs to but his true talents seem to lie in the way he manages processes and people, even when he is not in a position of authority. His PT scores are not the highest in the battalion but they are far from the worse. Hal is dedicated to knowing his military subjects by the book and is often a reference for other cadets. What makes Hal unique is his ability to seamlessly balance his obligations to ROTC and the National Guard with his academic responsibilities, maintaining a consistently high GPA. For the few cadets who can also achieve this it was not easy.

The term newbie refers to those cadets who are not necessarily new to the ROTC program, but to the Army in general. Although there are cadets in all four MS classes who have only had Basic Training I do not consider them to be newbie's because they have been exposed to a closed and immersive environment outside the comparatively relaxed ROTC program. Newbie's are those cadets who, by virtue of signing ROTC contracts as freshmen, have never experienced anything Army other than BSU ROTC.

Our MSIII class has two newbie's but you would never know it. In fact, I did not know this until late in the school year. The only thing they seem to be missing is hands-on experience and they make up for that with an enthusiasm for "new" things that other cadets do not share with them.

The cadets who enlisted for three or more years before joining the ROTC program are the veterans. They may or may not have deployment experience in Afghanistan or Iraq but they all know how the Army works, for better or worse. Brian and Hal are veterans, but so is Kelly. Two more veterans are Amy and Gary. Amy has been in the program for two years and comes over from the Air Force while Gary is a veteran in every sense having spent eight years on active-duty and participated in the Thunder Run- the opening assault into Baghdad in 2003. The stories these students tell help others understand new perspectives of Army culture and at times, the foreign culture they interacted with on a daily basis.

The drifter is the cadet who is contractually obligated to the ROTC program but sees it as a formality to becoming an officer. They drift along from mandatory training event to training event because they have to not because they want to. He or she knows what must be done to achieve the end result but they show little enthusiasm for it and typically put in minimal effort. It is not a coincidence that the drifter usually has previous experience with military life, either through prior service or their National Guard unit. However, this is not to say that all cadets with experience are drifters. Quite the opposite as the majority are dedicated to the program and their fellow cadets. It also must be noted that although the drifter is not the most enthusiastic person in the battalion, rarely are they disruptive or otherwise overtly negative towards other students or the

instructors. Interestingly, the drifter appears to be largely immune to shifts in morale and hence contribute to the overall emotional stability of the battalion by not tipping the scales in either direction.

What is a *Cadet*?

The young men and women who participate in Ball State's ROTC program want to be U.S. Army officers and they join for various reasons. Cadets like Eric, Tony and Amy have parents or close family members who served in the armed forces and they follow in their footsteps. Amy tells me, "I think that in a lot of ways I decided to be an officer because of things that I saw that were going wrong versus going right." Brian and Hal wanted more responsibility and more of an impact in their jobs. Brian states, "I felt that I had more to offer than being a Private for four years or a Specialist. I felt the process was too slow and I could take on a lot more responsibility than I had and do more for Soldiers as a leader" while Hal adds, "I didn't want to just sit back and do my job and get by. I wanted to be active and have a say on what was going on; whether it was what kind of training was getting done, how the training was being completed. And I felt the best way to do that was by becoming an officer." Carrie, Jake, and Kevin wanted adventure while Gary wanted to learn a new skill set that he feels is personally rewarding and pays well in the civilian market. Debbie always wanted to be in the military and for her staying enlisted was not an option- "I've been that Private and I don't want to do that shit." I too am driven by the idealistic notion that I would be more productive as an Army officer (versus remaining an enlisted Soldier) and of course the work and the pay would be better. More importantly for me, however, was the idea that my education and

experience could make a difference in an organization apparently in desperate need of youthful, ambitious thinkers.

Although they are all patriotic and idealistic no one said they wanted to fight terrorists (not that they were not planning on doing just that) and nobody joined for the money. These student-soldiers know where their training will ultimately lead them and they accept the responsibility they will carry with them throughout their careers. They plan training, evaluate cadet underclassmen, and supervise the operation of the battalion. Upon completion of four military science courses, a military history class, and the Leadership Development Assessment Course at Fort Lewis they will take the oath of office and will receive their commissions in the rank of Second Lieutenant. But a cadet is not an officer.

Seven out of the ten MSIII cadets interviewed serve in Indiana National Guard units around the state while better than 80 percent of the Cardinal Battalion does as well. Their simultaneous membership, however, does not imply there is much, if any, connection between their two sets of duties and responsibilities. On the contrary, according to many of the SMP cadets their National Guard units are not sure of their exact role. Some cadets are notional platoon leaders or serve in staff positions while others act as squad leaders (a job typically reserved for a Sergeant or Corporal) or shadow miscellaneous NCOs and officers throughout the weekend. According to Amy, the Senior Airman turned Army cadet,

I have- we have- no peers. When we go to our Guard unit we don't have peers because we're not NCOs and we're not officers. And there are a lot of things we are authorized to do because we're not officers. They don't really have a job for us, even though I am

considered a Platoon Leader they don't really have a job for me. I feel like I am in limbo as a cadet.

This sentiment is not unusual and represents a status confusion that is prevalent among all cadets. Cadets are neither enlisted Soldiers nor are they NCOs.

The term cadet is probably most often equated with someone who is outside the rank structure, an individual in transition who is neither here nor there. He or she is much like an IET Soldier before his first assignment (an Initial Entry Training Soldier is in the process of attending, but has not yet completed Basic Training and Advanced Individual Training. When an enlisted Soldier completes these mandatory schools they are no longer classified as IET. They are then classified as MOSQ'd, or Military Occupation Specialty qualified). In the Army a transitional identity is associated with newness and non-belonging. This can be detrimental to some cadets, especially those who have prior service. The reason for this lies in the fact that identity and affiliation are pivotal concepts within the military as in all forms of social life. ROTC programs like Ball State's attempt rebuild an individual's previous identity in accordance with its own model or models. This becomes especially problematic for the cadet when he or she has to interact with former peers, a meeting made much more difficult by the negative connotations often connected with the rank and station of a cadet. An enlisted Soldier, especially an NCO, who seeks to become an officer has, in essence, turned their back on a particular lifestyle and community. Though most enlisted personnel understand a Soldier's reason for wanting to become an officer they usually make sure that Soldier knows how they feel about it, good naturedly or otherwise. For Amy, being a cadet causes anxiety when she is around her former co-workers.

It's kinda sad to me because there are a lot of times I don't want to tell my peers from the Air Force that I did go through all the steps to become an NCO in the Air Force; which means that I had the choice to come over in the Army to be an E-5 or to be a cadet. And it's one of those things I don't want to tell people that I'm a cadet because they laugh at me or they think it's funny or the fact that I'm in a commissioning program because I think there is a certain stigma about ROTC to those who are already in the military. They look at the ROTC as not being a difficult program, especially a lot of the NCOs. They think it's just fun and games and that we don't learn anything. It's almost one of those things that I just tell them, 'oh yeah, being an officer when I graduate' but there is no, 'oh I'm a cadet' it's still, 'I'm an E-5, I get paid as an E-5' and that's how I say it. I don't say 'cadet.' And I don't like putting 'cadet' on my emails and stuff.

Brian also endures his share of criticism from enlisted members of his Guard unit, however he knows it is temporary and he does not take offense. Although he considers this to be all to be in good fun he does find it a challenge to handle this duality, these shifts and ambiguities of rank, status, and authority.

It's different when you go to your unit if you're an SMP cadet. If you've been in the unit awhile some of the guys might give you some crap for becoming a cadet and not staying enlisted- wanting to go to the officer side. You get picked on a lot I guess. They make up little names and stuff like that...like 'cadidiot' and stuff like that- just to tease. But at the same time you know and they know when you get the rank that you're an officer. Sometimes you can kinda tell when it's in a joking manner and when you're actually messing up. Usually when it is in a joking manner it's out of some kind of respect. That's just the way that the enlisted people I know show their gratitude towards you- by making fun of you. I guess that's true for a lot of us. But as far as on campus and with other cadets, stuff like that, being a cadet is learning to become an officer, learning to become a leader on a different level than the enlisted side. And it's a lot wider range; once you become a cadet and you're SMP also you have two groups that you're a part of. Two groups that you're either leading Soldiers in or learning to

develop them. It's two kinds of varying groups and two different focuses you have to pay attention to.

Even though cadets who are not in a National Guard unit, and therefore not subject to the shifts in a particular set of Army identities or the ridicule from peers that results, they are not immune from feeling apprehension about the cadet label. Eric, a newbie whose parents are both Army officers, takes a pragmatic approach to his situation.

Honestly...a lot of people think the term is derogatory...and I don't like the term. Right now, I mostly look at it like I am a college student that happens to be going into the military and training for it. I mean I don't expect it to mean a whole lot. It's actually the Army that means something.

Every cadet that is razzed for leaving the enlisted corps or experiences negative connotations associated with the term "cadet" places somewhat different meaning on the word. For the prior enlisted, those who sought responsibility beyond that of the noncommissioned officer and the common soldier, it is a term synonymous with abandonment. The formerly enlisted cadet has denied the life of an ancient brotherhood, a union cemented in the trials, tribulations, and hardship of the warrior class. It is not a matter of socioeconomic class or status, but a matter of voluntarily choosing and accepting a new life and refusing the old. Taking on this new role is sometimes seen as akin to betrayal in the eyes of the enlisted and they are often keen on letting the offender know how they feel, though with somewhat less animosity than towards those who leave the service altogether. Teasing is a socially acceptable means of releasing the tension surrounding changes of identity, especially when rank and status shifts are part of this. For the cadets who have no prior military experience the role of cadet is a constant

reminder of their newness and of the liminal phase (Turner, 1969) they must traverse before they can realize self-actualization (rebuild identity) and gain acceptance. Similarly, this is why most new lieutenants so desperately crave their first deployment as a chance to prove themselves worthy of belonging to the Army.

For a number of Ball State cadets the issue of identity is something that has to be negotiated on a weekly, even daily, basis. However, on campus a cadet's primary identity is that of a student. They go to classes, study for tests, participate in intramural sports and internships, and hang out or party when not studying or training. In this regard, a cadet is not much different than any other student on campus, though Amy makes an important point acknowledging, "it's a balance between being a kid and being a partier and knowing that you have responsibilities to the ROTC and to the Army and you can't do whatever you want to do. I think in some ways it is the consequences." When a cadet puts on the uniform that individual becomes a student of Army policies and doctrine, tactics and procedures. The consequences of inattention or laziness here have a different reality than failing a test. Overall, a cadet has a number of identities that allow him to move in and out of civilian and military worlds and eventually allow him or her to do the same in a world far removed from anything previously known. Of these roles, however it is the one of student that serves him best. This is what a cadet often will discover himself, if only in hindsight. According to one cadet, "You're going to have to make yourself accountable and hold yourself accountable...I think that is what being an officer is about. When you make mistakes and you correct yourself, don't make it again, and you learn. It's a constant learning process."

Symbols and Meaning

Being in the BSU ROTC program can often mean different things to different individuals. Cadets like Hal see it as an opportunity to brush up on critical skills learned in other Army schools while cadets like Eric see it as their first opportunity to gain any experience. For a few cadets being in the program can even mean a (temporary) loss of status but for most, “being a cadet just means getting ready to commission as an officer.”

All cadets, regardless of their status issues are surrounded by symbols beyond unit patches and skill badges. Rank, station, discipline, and interminable formations are enduring symbols of both the Army and ROTC but the ones that most dominate an MSIII’s life are the yellow and blue cards. A yellow card is a two-sided 5x8 record of what a cadet was tasked to do, what they did, and how they did it. On campus yellow cards were usually filled out every time a cadet conducted PT and on rare occasions, when they lead a patrol during a field exercise. At LDAC a yellow card is filled out after completing an assigned garrison position (two total), leading a STX lane (two total), or a patrolling lane (two total). The cumulative purpose of these cards is to list individual activities ROTC values so that an evaluator can assess your skills and competences and make a convincing written argument for how you should be graded. The yellow card is one half an evaluation data, the other half being the blue card. The blue card is a list of 16 leadership dimensions that an MSIV or cadre member evaluates when observing a cadet’s activity. In each category a cadet can receive an E for an outstanding performance, an S for an average performance, or the dreaded N for needs improvement. Every cadet strives for as many E’s as possible and sees every N as a sign of failure. Similar to letter grades these letters symbolize a cadet’s worthiness and ability to become

an officer and for each cadet represent years of hard work. Blue cards are more than a mere assessment of a cadet's ability, they are vital to whether he or she will receive his branch and career of choice. E's, S's, and N's, symbols themselves, are totaled up throughout the MSIII year and added to LDAC scores for a composite rating. This score is then combined with the LDAC APFT, university GPA, and other minor activities for an overall rating that is posted on the Order of Merit List (OML), a ROTC-wide system that compares all cadets seeking their commission in the next year. Based on this, roughly the top 20% are guaranteed to receive the branch of their choice. The system that determines a cadet's future branch (i.e. Corps of Engineers, Signal Corps, Transportation Corp, etc.) is not a transparent one but the pressure associated with attaining a high APFT score and favorable evaluations colors every cadet's MSIII year.

ROTC is synonymous with training and as such no two learning objectives mean more than battle drills and operations orders (OPORDERS or OPORD's). PT is obviously something that is stressed by the BSU cadre but, to the cadet, it is less significant than battle drills and OPORD's. Map reading and land navigation, part of any military operation, are important lessons but they are not stressed beyond the first few weeks of the fall semester. OPORD's are a method for relaying information to other people about a particular mission through a five-paragraph format. These five paragraphs (situation, mission, execution, service and support, command and signal) and their numerous subparagraphs are memorized by cadets and are often used in conjunction with battle drill rehearsal. The OPORD, unlike many topics, is a year long focus for the MSIII's. Battle drills, coordinated actions for attacking or defending an objective, are designed to provoke an almost involuntary response to spoken commands and, as such,

necessarily require a lot of repetition. These drills are symbolic of Ball State ROTC because they consistently bring cadets together as a team, a hallmark of all Army training. It is this sense of teamwork, cemented during the intense training of two semesters and continued in the early summer months that cadets bring with them to the Leadership Development Assessment Course.

LDAC- the Final Exam

Fort Lewis is located near Tacoma some 45 minutes south of Seattle. Temperatures usually stay in the mid- 70's or low 80's and it rains almost constantly. Interstate 5 splits the post in two and LDAC is held in the section known as North Fort, a location that housed and trained some 5000 cadets divided into 13 regiments over three months in 2007.

For prior service cadets like Gary, Brian, and Debbie LDAC would be very similar to other Army schools in terms of organization and function. For other cadets this was their first exposure to the Big Army and military life outside their university's ROTC program. Every cadet, regardless of his or her experience, noticed that, "The training was more solidly cadet run. All the cadets do all the work, all the training, all the planning and the cadre was there just to make sure we didn't screw it up."

When I got to Fort Lewis the bus dropped me and approximately 250 other cadets off outside a collection of World War II age buildings that would serve as our barracks and regimental headquarters. Army issued duffel bags in hand we were herded into four long and winding lines so that we could check in and find out what company, platoon, and squad we would be in. To be sure we did not forget, a cadre member would write

this on the back of one of our hands. It may sound very first grade but those marks were like a passport, confirming that we were indeed where and who we were supposed to be. It took about an hour for all of us to check in and then we were shuffled to separate company and platoon areas to wait on the next officer or sergeant who would guide us through the next phase of in-processing. After standing around for some unknown amount of time on surprisingly dusty parade grounds platoons were escorted to their barracks where we were given five minutes to use the latrine, find a bunk and a locker, pull our medical records out of duffel bags, fill our canteens, and lock up our gear. We new guys, united with the rest of the platoon that had arrived days earlier, however briefly, ran out to formation where the assembled mass was harangued for tardiness and a lack of motivation. We were then marched double-time over to an administrative building for our formal in-processing. Once there we were crammed into a very hot and poorly ventilated room to fill out and turn in more paperwork. Once done with these forms we were sent to another room in another building to repeat the process. The forms at each stop took about 30 seconds to complete but they were invariably accompanied by 15 to 20 minutes of sit-and-sweat time. The Army has a name for this overall technique, it is called “hurry up and wait,” and this is only one of many examples that occurred in LDAC.

After rushing around to half a dozen stations we were sent over to the dining facility. The process of moving through the chow hall was the same on day 1 as it was on day 33, only the number of people changed. To get into line every cadet had to complete ten pull-ups, with or without the aid of a buddy. The line itself was a mass of camouflaged cadets that snaked perpendicular to the squat white building. Each coil had

roughly eight to ten cadets standing at parade rest with no more than 12 inches in between them. There was less than that between you and person on your left and right. An NCO and a member of the cooking staff whose job it was to make little slash marks for every cadet who entered regulated entry into the chow hall. When the NCO gave permission for a group of five or ten people to enter every cadet would sound off with their numbered place in line and the name of the regiment. For example, if I was the fifth person from the Red Lion regiment to walk through the door than I would yell out, "Red Lion five!" On a normal day it could take anywhere from 45 minutes to an hour to get your food and sit down and about seven minutes to eat and get back outside. The food was decent and better than a lot of other places where I had been. By an almost unanimous decision breakfast is the best meal of the day, probably because you knew exactly what you were going to get whereas lunch and dinner were always a toss-up.

When we new arrivals had finished dinner chow we went to a new building and got into a new line to receive linens. We were all very tired and many of us were starting to feel the effects of jetlag but the wait was, as usual, long and seemingly pointless. The holdup this time was that the one individual in charge of dispensing clean sheets and pillowcases could not be found. After another interminable stretch of time we finally had the linens we so desperately wanted to curl up and sleep in, but it was not to be. Unfortunately, we made it back to our barracks ten minutes before lights out- the Army training ritual in which the lights are shut off and all individuals must be in their beds. I know this and I understand this and on any other night I whole-heartedly endorse this, but not tonight. As it turns out, there is an exception for those just getting in that day. Awesome. Now all I need to do is make my bunk and dig out my personal hygiene bag,

a set of PT clothes (where the hell are my running shoes!), and a thousand other items I was sure to need first thing the next morning all without making a sound and in absolute darkness. It is just past 0100 hours when I could finally crawl onto the top of my bed, wrapped in my poncho liner, otherwise affectionately known as the “woobie.” I am so tired I easily tune out the farts and snores that punctuated the night’s silence. On the training calendar today was officially classified as day 0. Tomorrow is day 1 and wake up is at 0345.

The next day is another long day, characterized by more in-processing, more running around, and more waiting. After morning chow we were shepherded to the busses that would take us Old Madigan, the part of the post hospital that was used for processing cadets, and the Central Issuing Facility (CIF). There were not enough busses for all of us. The cadets who did not make it onto a bus were treated to travel by cattle car, a metal boxcar towed by a semi-truck that was originally used for hauling various livestock.

During the first part of the day we were given complete medical examinations (with the prerequisite waiting in line) and a pre-packaged meal that contained a hamburger bun, some type of canned meat, fruit in a can, juice in a can, chips in a can, and a cookie. These meals are only slightly better than MRE’s, depending on whom you talked to, and are standard fare when away from the chow hall or not deep in the woods. The rest of the day was devoted to signing out the Army gear we needed for the next 33 days. The CIF is a huge assembly line-like warehouse that distributes equipment like sleeping bags, ruck sacks, and uniforms with the proficiency of an assembly line. Even

so, there is the inevitable waiting in lines to get your stuff. Laden down with awkwardly packed and carried gear we board the busses and trucks and head back to the barracks.

After dinner the whole platoon crowded onto the first floor of the two floor barracks. Each floor is no more than 400 square feet. Six bunks line each side of the first floor with a latrine and shower on one end and a tiny cadre office and a room for female cadets on the other. The second floor is similar minus the office. Also where the latrines were located on the first floor there are two additional rooms for the females. Our platoon has 53 people, nine of whom are females. When everyone is settled into a space the cadre, or TACS, come out and introduce themselves. They tell us what their expectations are and give us advice on how to succeed at LDAC. After some final instructions the cadre left us to prepare for the next day.

Two things they told us reinforced what we had learned in our programs back home. The first was that a cadet was cadet and that there would be no other hierarchy in place at LDAC other than the assigned leadership positions. To facilitate this the uniforms we brought from home had to be sterilized; stripped of any combat patches, tabs, and skill badges. Just like in the Ball State ROTC program, prior identities linked to one's service or training history were erased. Presumably this was done to encourage cadets to rely on the platoon leaders for direction and not the cadets whose prior experience and training could be used to challenge or undermine the authority of less experienced cadets who happened to be in charge. Cadets invariably gravitated towards those who had firsthand knowledge anyway, not because they were better leaders (though some of them certainly were) but because they were willing to share what they knew for the good of the platoon. Leadership positions were never compromised in my platoon.

In fact, all the squads were made stronger by the pooled knowledge of those who had “been there and done that” before. The second point that linked LDAC to ROTC at our home universities was the notion of teamwork. Teamwork was the key to success and a way to help each other cope with personal failure or the PCS blues. This is a type of homesickness that commonly affects a Soldier far removed from their home and family on a training assignment. PCS blues typically last the first week or two and became significantly more pronounced the next day when all cell phones, PDA’s, and iPod’s were confiscated for their duration of our training.

Teamwork was a concept everybody was familiar with because a quick look around the barracks revealed cadets helping each other make their bunks (one cadet took it upon himself to hold a class on the proper technique for making crisp hospital corners), assemble their ruck sacks, and square away their lockers. Later that night cadets shared supplies and squads got together to create their own SOP’s (Standard Operating Procedure)- a method of assigning specific code words, actions, or functions to a member of the unit. SOP’s were especially helpful during the FTX when a squad did not have time to figure out who would be the best medic, who would search the POW’s, and who was good at talking to the civilians on the battlefield. As Gary, the quiet veteran mechanic-turned-nurse, liked to say, “the hallmark of ROTC culture is probably the planning...[and] working together.” Although teamwork was fostered and encouraged in ROTC, LDAC strengthened and reinforced the concept through almost every activity done during the 33 days of training.

However, as in Basic Training and AIT, no event could bring a group of Soldiers together like bonding through suffering. When I asked Eric what LDAC was like he

described it to me as: “Long, a lot of boredom, cold, wet, a lot of misery, but a necessary part of training. Not necessarily the tactics you learn there, but more of the team building. How to work as a team and with the cadre...it was about that type of training.” Eric expressed that the conditions at Fort Lewis enhanced teamwork and communication because everyone wanted to get their task done as quickly as they could so they could get inside out of the weather as soon as possible. The rain and bad weather were something almost all the Ball State cadets I spoke to about LDAC remembered and talked about.

Debbie did not mind the rain as much because she was more concerned about her ability to perform under pressure. Like other cadets she did not want to disappoint her campus cadre or her platoon TACS, but she felt more driven to succeed by the expectations of her peers and herself. For Debbie, as well as many other cadets, LDAC was more than the ultimate ROTC final exam; it was an affirmation of the person she had become.

I would say that LDAC was the most important [training] because you’re expected to pass at everything you’ve learned throughout the three years. And you actually get to see what you’re made of once you get out there and you’re compared with other people. You see what you have and can offer to the military.

One cadet I spoke with saw LDAC differently. As for, “LDAC as a whole it seemed like there were a lot more people that were there to prove themselves whereas a lot of us...were just there to get it done.” For her, this was a very different experience from what she had seen at Ball State and in other military schools.

I also think that at LDAC there were a lot more people that thought they had something to prove whereas in a regular military training environment people let their experience

take over more so than people having to talk about it. Some of the other schools it seemed like they were more willing to get up and scream at people and talk to people like Drill Instructors instead of like people. And they didn't really grasp what leadership was...you always tend to relate to the people around you, but I felt that a lot of people at LDAC were more standoffish where all they want to do is talk at people instead of find out what their real problem was.

Every company and platoon had those individuals who confused leadership ability with the volume and sound of his or her voice. When these cadets are in a leadership position they shine for the evaluators. They are typically well-informed, decisive, assertive, and motivate others. They seemingly did everything right and their evaluations are usually among the best in the platoon. However, when these cadets are no longer in a graded position they could be rude, disruptive, and disrespectful to others. These people are known as "spotlight rangers." Brian, a man that puts maximum effort into everything he does and expects others to do the same told me, with evident disgust

We had those people you didn't want to be with. There were some...we had those people that were at the bottom two of the platoon or the squad and everybody knew it. When they were in charge they were compensating. When they weren't in charge [they were] sleeping, being the last one up, last one to do something.

When a cadet proves to be a "spotlight ranger" they in profound ways betray the trust of the platoon and violate the principles of teamwork. The result is that these cadets become pariahs and are generally avoided as much as possible. They are never chosen as team leaders and they are given minimum responsibility because they are undependable and because they, by their very nature, can threaten other cadet's evaluations. Sometimes all cadre members are aware of who these people are. If they are not they definitely find out

when peer rankings are turned in at the end of camp. Cadets ranked in the bottom third of the platoon by their peers not only have a lengthy discussion with the platoon TACS, but also with their PMS back home.

After all the squad and platoon activities were done for the day I wandered up to a corkboard that was already plastered with various pieces of information. Among the regimental and company policies, building maps, fire escape plans, and dozens of other papers I found the training schedule. Though there is a color code of sorts it takes me a few minutes to understand its organization and abbreviations. There are so many training activities planned for the first 20 days my head spins trying to comprehend the kind of timeline we will be held to. There does not seem to be enough time for all the activities scheduled let alone the APFT, map reading and land navigation, basic rifle marksmanship (BRM), combat water survival test (CWST), grenade course, obstacle courses, ruck marches, field leader's reaction course (FLRC), combatives, branch orientation, and dozens of other training tasks sandwiched in between. The day we are scheduled to leave for our 10-day field training exercise (FTX) also includes several additional training activities planned for the same day - first day out. Crammed in between patrolling techniques and occupying an assembly area is culture training. One third of a single day of LDAC is devoted to the one of the most critical and most critical skill sets in the Army.

Culture Training

What is culture? Ball State ROTC cadets tell me that, "culture is everyday life, just like being here in Muncie...all the stuff here in Muncie, this is...culture, what I do

here everyday.” And they say that, “culture...is your defining thing about you, what you grew up learning, what you’ve done.” When they talk about culture these cadets talk about family, beliefs, sports, and friends. They also talk about Army culture and the seven Army values (loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, personal courage) that define what a Soldier does and how they do it. When describing American culture cadets talk about independence, technology, capitalism, and video games. They also talk about movies, politics, and war. Taken together however, we do not come up with a definition of culture that you would find in any anthropology textbook but this is what culture means to the men and women who attended LDAC in the summer of 2007.

My platoon sits on aluminum bleachers that barely hold our number. We are in the shade of a large oak tree and there is a breeze that swirls around our position. In front of us is a stage, a 6x6 “bedroom” that is at the moment concealed by a dark blue curtain across the stage. In the small grass space outside the stage a role player dressed in a *qamis* and *shalwar*- traditional Afghan shirt and pants commonly found among the Pashtun’s, a *pakol* (hat) and fake beard sits cross-legged on a rug, holding a mug of *chai* (tea) and poking at the ground with a stick. Everyone is watching him to see what he would do when two officers (himself and an assistant) came around the other side and redirected everyone’s attention. The Major introduces himself and his assistant does likewise. Aided by poster board “slides” propped up on an easel made of lashed together sticks he launches into a definition of culture and the value of knowing it. It is not a bad class, but less than what you would learn in the first day of an introductory anthropology class. Or so I thought. Most of the cadets around me are doodling in their notebooks or have that

spaced out look on their face that means they only *appear* to be conscious. The fact that nothing this guy said was sinking in was later confirmed when I asked BSU cadets whether or not they enjoyed the presentation. Only three of them remembered the lecture. What they remembered best was what came next.

The purpose of the role-playing scenarios was to demonstrate the proper techniques for executing three separate terminal learning objectives (TLO's). The tasks we would be taught were how to conduct a bi-lateral meeting with the village mayor, how to conduct knock-and-searches, and how to diffuse a volatile situation using an interpreter. In the first scenario the mayor, the man we saw earlier, and two other village elders greeted a five-man squad of volunteers/demonstrators picked from our platoon. The squad's mission was to talk to the mayor about setting up a radio tower in the village, but it never got that far. Instead, the squad, and by extension the observers, learned that this mythical culture (an amalgamation of Iraqi and Afghan cultures that happened to speak Spanish) violated American notions of politeness and doing business by doing things at a pace the cadets were unfamiliar with. Squad members endured much small talk about family, weather, and geography while they politely ate strange meats from a bowl and tea with grass clippings sprinkled over the top. Though the concept that different cultures value such talk and can reveal important things about themselves through it was probably the more valuable lesson taught that day it was easily overshadowed by the odd looking and distasteful foods they had to eat, a favorite topic of conversation among the volunteers. From the point of view of the role players, the first obstacle to any mission is having to eat and drink anything that is put in front of you. They knew this and decided to have some fun with the cadets by making the food and

drinks they offered as foul tasting as possible. When the squad leader finally decided to press the issue of the radio tower the mayor separated him from the others and the elders did likewise with their targeted cadets. Of the three separate conversations taking place none of them were about a radio tower. When it became obvious that the mission was stalled the Major halted the exercise. His message- do not promise anything that you cannot personally deliver, stay focused on the mission, and do not get bogged down in extraneous conversation.

Where the overall lesson in the third TLO was primarily concerned with being aware of interpreter agendas the second scenario treated culture as an obstacle. I was the member of a squad assigned to enter a village and conduct knock-and search, a method for “politely” asking local villagers if they have weapons and then “respectfully” searching their home. Armed with the knowledge that the Palomans predominately use their left hand, do not observe physical space, and do not allow men to talk to their females we approach the “house.” The squad leader asks the man if he has any weapons, to which he replied that he did not, and then directs everyone to come outside so that they can be searched. A woman in a *burqa* comes out and a female from our squad conducts the search. The man does not want to let us in because he says that his brother is very sick and that his religion prohibits anybody from entering the room. The squad leader argues that we need to search his home and after a lengthy discussion the man allows me to have a quick peak inside the room where his brother is laid out in repose and covered by a body-length mosquito net. I tell the squad leader that I did not see anything and when we make to leave the instructor stops the scenario. He points out a few things we did right and then asks the Paloman if he had any weapons. The Paloman said that he did

and pulled out a (mock) RPG that was nestled between the wall and his “sick” brother. The Major rounded on the squad leader and myself and demanded to know why we did not find this item. I told him that I did not see the weapon and that I was wary of disturbing the sick brother. That is when the Major told all of us that we could not allow language barriers, religion, or any other cultural nuance to get in the way of completing the mission, adding that civilians will often lie to Soldiers to get them to go away. Ultimately the message conveyed was an attitude of “culture be damned” and “mission first.” When I asked Eric about his experience he said that the training was frustrating and a little confusing. “The only thing I can say is, ‘through the culture I’ve got to get my mission done.’ Where is the line drawn at? Where can I say, ‘fuck your culture, go to Hell, I got to do this?’ When do you say that? That’s the hardest thing you can do.” Hal was calmer but equally frustrated about what he perceived to be a lack of both training and direction.

When you receive a mission you need to complete a certain task. When one of the obstacles is culture and having to deal with people it is hard because you want to make sure that you complete your mission. That’s certainly the essential task and at the same time you got to understand culturally, ‘are we doing the right thing to make sure our presence here is a good presence and do I think people understand what we’re doing and why we are doing it?’ I think when you’re not trained enough on cultural awareness then you come across those situations that we’ve had problems with in the past. It will take longer for you to complete the mission. It will take longer for you to figure out what you’re going to do.

Although I understood the Major was attempting to convey a sense of the imminent danger inherent in every Soldier’s every task and mission it was not until later that I began to question the subtler message that was being communicated. Did I

understand it correctly? Is culture an expendable luxury? What did the other cadets think of the training? When I asked Hal he guffawed,

It's never really addressed how to deal culturally with other people. I don't think the training really shows you how to deal with someone from this country or that country, this religion or that religion. I think overall, the focus at LDAC right now, and throughout ROTC, is how to run the squad STX and how to run the patrolling. And when cultural variables are thrown in there I don't think that is really addressed. A big part of culture training, again it was only about half a day, but from what I took away was how to deal with a friendly foreigner, not so much the enemy. But if you need to go to someone's house and conduct a friendly search of their house how do you deal with those people and explain to them what you're doing, how you're doing it? Overall I would say that I really haven't been taught a whole lot about culture. But as far as cultural awareness in the military...it is hard to really say that I am culturally aware and understand the situation.

Eric told me; despite all its shortcomings the exercise taught him that culture does impact a mission and that it was something he needed to take into consideration.

It doesn't make me more knowledgeable about cultures but makes me stop and think, 'hey before I get there what else should I be getting.' It's not necessarily the awareness but the 'hey, is this how their culture really acts?' and if it is then is it acceptable for their actions toward me or my actions towards them? My ignorance is based on my cultural knowledge.

Debbie summed it up by saying that, like it or not, "you have to treat everyone like an enemy because you don't know how they're going to react." What troubled cadets the most is not being able to predict the consequences of their actions might have and fearing the worst. Making the wrong decision in a training environment could incite a (mock) firefight and will undoubtedly get your ass chewed out by the NCOIC or OIC. Making a

similar mistake in the real world could get people killed and/or irrevocably damage relations in that area, further endangering U.S. strategic aims as well as the lives of Soldiers and civilians.

Despite the obvious limitations of TLO's at LDAC Ball State cadets liked the cultural awareness training and wanted more of it. However, I found some curious omissions in ROTC's overall approach to building cultural awareness. In 99% of training Army-wide, from Basic Training to the Sergeant Major Academy and from ROTC to the Command and General Staff College, the tenants of teamwork and hands-on experience are stressed. In those rare cases where teamwork is formally not allowed most Soldiers, cadets, and officers still find a way to help each other out in whatever way they can. What made the cultural awareness training at LDAC counterintuitive to all other Army training was the fact that hands-on experience was extremely limited and there was not an opportunity for teamwork to evolve through, for example, participation in a series of exercises and tasks that dealt with the same issue. Carrie expressed her preference saying, "It helped me just to- instead of watching it- doing it because I am more action than watch." Further, the message the role-playing scenarios conveyed was the idea that culture was an obstacle to be overcome by the ingenuity of the team, specifically the officer-in-charge. Unsurprisingly, many of the cadets did not exclusively rely on what they learned from the TLO's; instead utilizing the time-honored tradition of teamwork and they wanted to learn how cultural competency could an advantage, not just an obstacle, on the battlefield.

Applying Cultural Awareness

Although I had never heard culture so blatantly referred to as a potential obstacle as I did during those TLO's this is not the first time I was taught by the Army that culture was an obstacle. At the Camp Atterbury (IN) CFTX, a combined field training exercise held every April that involved ROTC programs from several universities in our brigade, my squad was tasked with gathering information on a newly constructed bunker. As we slogged through the woods we encountered a "civilian" on the other side of a clearing talking to himself in Farsi. Being the point man for this mission I signaled my squad leader and told him what I saw. Since the civilian appeared to be unarmed I was ordered to try to make contact with the very broken and rusty Farsi I could still remember from my days as a PSYOP Soldier. From afar he said hello in Farsi and I responded in kind, asking him how he was doing and motioning for him to come and talk to me. As the man carefully picked his way towards me he kept gesturing to the sparse area around saying, "*khatar, meenha; khatar meenha,*" which I remembered to mean, "danger, mines." I passed the information back. After hugging the civilian and kissing each other on the cheek, exchanging food and water, and making small talk the man told me that he knew the men in the bunker and that they would gladly quit working if we gave them food and water. When all was said and done we completed our mission without a shot being fired; a fact that we were all very proud of. I mention this story because in this instance knowing something about the local culture enabled the squad to avoid the minefield. Knowledge of basic phrases while not avoiding close contact and food sharing resulted in some level of trust. Every other squad that day failed to respect, or at least not overreact to, the most basic cultural tenants, and they failed the mission.

Role players at LDAC repeated and emphasized the same set of themes. Regrettably, like the CFTX there were too few situations that allowed cadets to go beyond learning that culture was something that had to be “overcome.” In one exercise, for example, the Spanish language was intended to be an obstacle that impeded cooperation with the “locals,” but this failed because many of the cadets were native Spanish speakers. However, the one obstacle that did impact every squad at some point during the FTX was the host nation’s view of women.

Of the 10 days in the field, four were spent on the STX lanes (each lane was approximately 200 to 350 meters long and had an objective that needed to be completed in an allotted amount of time) and two on the patrolling lanes (two squads formed a platoon and were required to complete an objective that covered approximately 1000 to 2500 meters). Cultural contact during the patrolling lanes was minimum because the focus was on controlling and covering a lot of heavily forested terrain in a short time. Two of the four STX lanes had little to no cultural component while the other two were known as “variable lanes” (because every squad had been on it at least once) and had actors that did more than shoot at you.

Although in one exercise language was not a factor female cadets were seemingly challenged every step of the way. A female squad leader was not allowed to talk with any of the “locals” and had to speak through a proxy. The male who interceded on the behalf of the female was ridiculed for taking orders from a woman and negotiations faltered as a result. Interestingly, whenever this happened cadre encouraged cadets to treat the locals as a physical obstacle to be bound, gagged, and carried to the rear lines. They, in short, could not be allowed to interfere with the mission and if they could not be

reasoned (as North Americans understand the term) with then they were a liability to be removed by whatever means possible. In other situations females could not act as medics because they were not allowed to touch a male from the opposite culture. During one particular mission we came across two friendly foreign soldiers who had been seriously wounded in a mortar attack. As we approached them we came under fire, forming a hasty perimeter. While most of the squad members were tasked to neutralize the threat two females worked to stabilize the casualties. This division of labor of course reflected and reinforced conventional American expectations regarding gender. In the end, their help was unwanted and one of the foreign soldiers killed the other because he had become “unclean.” Though the lane TAC advised us to “let them die if they did not want help” the squad found this exercise to be thought provoking. This exercise would alter the way we planned and executed future missions. As it turned out, every squad who went through this exercise came to a similar realization. As one cadet put it,

Things that are accepted here might not be accepted there. And I think that is all part of the balance of being, not just an officer, but being a Soldier. It’s figuring out- and in a lot of ways being a person in society, being within all of these different cultures...it’s figuring out when and where things are acceptable.

So did cultural awareness training instill any kind of competency or adaptability in cadets? To a certain degree the answer is yes. Although the TLO’s were really more of a reminder that culture would be a factor during the upcoming FTX cadets learned to rely on their teammates, as sources of relevant knowledge in order to supplement poorly understood concepts the Army had taught them and to enhance mission success. Ball State cadets reported that each of their squad’s had a couple of individuals that they felt

understood people better, could speak with others more easily, or were more inclined to stay cool under pressure. One cadet told me, “I think your mission evolves from the culture. I think your mission is about understanding the background of the people.” This usually translated into relying on somebody on a mission who had prior experience or training and certainly somebody who knew more than what the cultural awareness training had provided that summer. For example, Amy’s squad had a cadet who had traveled all over the world while growing up because his father was an Army officer. According to Amy, he was excellent source of information because he helped the squad understand what it was like to live somewhere and not speak the same language or even eat the same foods. Brian had a teammate who was always “cool as a cucumber” and was the perfect choice to handle media and civilians on the battlefield. Another cadet told me that his squad had a prior service cadet who used to be a desk anchor with AFN (Armed Forces Network- a television station that broadcasts to military personnel around the world) and his public affairs background was especially helpful. Debbie, recounting her success at the FTX proudly told me,

You would have to be very flexible going into that situation [where there are civilians on the battlefield]. And you’ve got to know the background of the civilians on the battlefield and the background of why it is going on- around the entire situation. So you just have to be flexible and be willing to accept any kind of situation.

This was enabled by her teammates, their diverse backgrounds, and their willingness to share any additional insight others were not privy to. She added,

As squad leader’s I think we were alike because we were all pretty excited that we knew something. We all knew each others intent and we were all there to back each

other up so each of us could get the best possible rating at LDAC. So we had a mutual agreement that we wouldn't be blue falcons and we would always back each other up. We created our own SOPs...they were needed so that we could successfully complete the first training we had.

So how do other cadets overcome this model of culture as an obstacle to mission success? Cadets obviously rely on planning, teamwork, and communication when accomplishing any task, particularly under stressful conditions. Brian tells me that cultural competency is an important factor in any mission and that officers and NCOs need to ensure that everybody has been properly briefed on the situation and the cultural components relevant to that objective. They need to be given enough time to figure it out as a team and that information needs to be communicated, reviewed, and tacitly understood prior to leaving for the mission. According to Brian, "...you've got to keep it [cultural awareness] in the forefront of your mind, not in the back when you're under pressure. I think if you have it consciously on your mind all the time then you're going to be aware and not mess up and get hit."

Another key component related to cultural competence is the ability to adapt to the situation on the ground. When describing the FTX at LDAC Debbie recounts the sometimes intentionally vague nature of some missions.

You have no knowledge about what is going on around you so you have to base your mission on the culture even if that may not be your mission as a whole. But in order to be successful and have the least amount of casualties you have to go in there very knowledgeable about the culture, about what is going on around you, about how the people are in order to accomplish the mission. I think it would be better if you have to understand the culture and you had to do the mission together.

Expanding on this idea Brian adds, “You’ve got to adjust to the situation while still keeping your focus. It can be difficult when you’re not thinking about...when you’re too focused on the culture and not enough on the mission, but being able to think back and forth between both is very important.” Adaptation is especially critical when working with diverse human populations, possibly unaccounted for during the initial higher-level phases of mission planning. With some consternation Amy told me, “I think the toughest thing is balancing your mission with the mission of that culture as far as mixing that with the friendlies from that culture...and so I think it’s meeting the needs of those, your culture and theirs, your mission and theirs.” Perhaps the most important factor to acquiring some culture competence is learning to see culture not as an obstacle, but rather as a learning opportunity.

CONCLUSION

“How one looks at organizational culture largely determines what it is.” - J. Steven Ott,
1989

The purpose of this project is to identify what ROTC culture is and determine what culture and culture awareness training means to Ball State cadets. This research takes into account three factors - the cultural context of a Ball State ROTC cadet, the cultural awareness training they received at LDAC in the summer of 2007, and the need for cadets to have access to viable cultural literacy programs.

During a cadet's time in the program he or she learns to synthesize the specific tenants of university culture and the values and beliefs of the U.S. Army, forming a culture that is predicated on balancing the educational requirements of a baccalaureate degree (and in some cases, a masters degree) with the methodical indoctrinization of the U.S. Army Reserve Officer Training Corps. This cultural system, one that is neither purely academic nor fully military, represents a liminal zone (Turner, 1969) that prepares the individual to ultimately assume the duties and responsibilities of an officer (incorporation phase). As a consequence of this liminality a cadet's attitudes and opinions are continually influenced by both the organizational culture of ROTC and the Army as well as the social norms of the university. This result is a disjunction concerning how culture is perceived and how it is used.

An analysis of the data reveals that ROTC culture, and consequently culture awareness training, has a potentially different meaning to Ball State cadets and LDAC instructors. This is exemplified in the cadet perception that “culture is part of the mission,” a system of rules that should govern one’s actions in all but the most dire circumstances. At best, this notion is idealistic in that it assumes that the individual officer will be able to appeal to reason over, or otherwise influence a specific obstacle (here culture) so as to achieve the penultimate and ancient army imperative- to fix, close with, and kill the enemy. At worst, it assumes the Army is, with its present resources, capable of understanding cultural nuances that occur in almost every mission. What LDAC exercises seem to reinforce is the cadre’s view that a host nation’s culture should not impede mission completion under any circumstances; indeed that culture is an obstacle more quickly overcome by the use of force. The fact that Ball State students and the ROTC program do not perceive culture this way suggests that current culture training initiatives for cadets may be incompatible with the organizational culture of the U.S. Army.

Perhaps one of the greatest reasons why ROTC and the Army as a whole do not conceptualize culture in the same way stems from the fact that they operate within separate and distinct organizational cultures. J. Steven Ott (*The Organizational Culture Perspective*, 1989) states, “if organizational culture is defined as beliefs and values, then cultures develop through the processes by which beliefs and values are learned” (84). Accordingly, he lists three mutually supporting sources of organizational culture, 1) “the broader societal culture in which an organization resides,” 2) “the nature of an organization’s business or business environment,” and 3) “the beliefs, values, and basic

assumptions held by founder(s) or other early dominant leader(s)” (75). It could be argued that the Army is shaped organizationally and ideologically by the emphasis it (and the nation) places on “mission.” Furthermore, it can be argued that this emphasis has led to the Army, in its training of cadets, treating culture as though it was an obstacle.

Although it could be debated that ROTC and the Regular Army reside within the same “societal culture” for the purposes of cultural training they do not. Ball State, like other universities, is situated within an academic community dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and scholarship. Young men and women study a number of subjects based on the requirements of a degree or based on genuine interest. The majority of their professors are there because they want to be and because they have a passion for teaching and research. With the exception of special assignments, military instruction is insular-specific posts conduct vocational training for selected personnel and Army-wide subjects like first-aid and land navigation are (literally) taught by the book (specific field manuals and training manuals). The personal interests of the student Soldier is immaterial.

While the President of the United States and subsequent foreign policy dictates the “business” of all military affairs there are subtle differences in the way the various components of the Army carry out their tasks, though they are often interconnected. Both ROTC and the Army as a whole are responsible for training warriors and leaders as well as perpetuating Army culture. However, the biggest difference is that a ROTC program like Ball State trains and indoctrinates leaders largely inside a particular context. That is to say that, unlike the rest of the Army, ROTC is neither rapidly reassessing its techniques and procedures for developing competent leaders at the individual school level (the ROTC curriculum is dictated by Cadet Command). Nor are they necessarily

required to do so (cadets will not die if lessons learned from the most recent deployments are not immediately incorporated into the program). Because Army units operate in real world, life-and-death, situations the onus is on them to quickly correct deficiencies so that the next unit does not suffer the same consequences or relay successful strategies so others may employ them. ROTC does not work with the same pressures. This is exemplified by a common phrase from ROTC instructors that states, “you’ll learn it from your unit when you get there.” These instructors, some having served 20 years or more, can say this because they know that ROTC programs are only meant to provide the student with a generalized understanding of military subjects versus the more in-depth, task-dependent training a regular unit provides. Ultimately, it is easier to convey a single message about the battlefield and mission, one that became strikingly obvious during LDAC, that culture is most often an obstacle to be overcome through the correct application of battle drills and the warrior ethos. But these few examples show that ROTC and the Regular Army’s “business and business environment” differ significantly by way of mission set and context.

However, both organizations are defined by the same values and beliefs starting with the Founding Fathers. The most notable difference according to Neiberg (Making Citizen Soldiers, 2000) is that ROTC programs were instituted as a check against the (feared) military elitism of the service academies (West Point, Annapolis), and would produce officers who had greater ties to, and more loyalty towards, the communities in which they were raised. Although Ball State ROTC is traditionally a school that turns out officers for the National Guard (19 out of 24 commissioned in 2007 and 2008) there seemed to be little operational difference between it and similarly sized schools that

commissioned more active-duty officers. When describing the character of an organization, in this case comparing ROTC with other Army units, the biggest factor lies not with Founder's ideals but with leadership of the recent past and those currently in place. While it is true that officers are not with their units very long before being reassigned what they do while there can impact generations far removed from word or deed. For example, the heroic actions of Audie Murphy during World War II are a lasting part of the legacy of the 3rd Infantry Division. Although Audie Murphy is well cited in the lore of the Army as a whole he is specifically a hero of the 3rd ID, providing a model of honor, duty, and courage that members strive to emulate. Generally speaking, ROTC programs do not have heroes that define the program. Ball State certainly does not. Current commanders and leaders throughout a unit organization will exert influence on its men and women; either through their training standards, their leadership style, or by some other means positive or negative, adding to the culture of battalion, company, platoon, etc. ROTC also falls into this category, however, the organization is much smaller (Army divisions and regiments compared to individual school programs) and there are fewer opportunities to create a lasting legacy especially given the course curriculum.

This research suggests that ROTC culture training is also ineffective because it unsuccessfully attempts to bridge two competing paradigms; the traditional Army model bent on dominating one's opponent and the current Army model that prizes adaptability, flexibility, and cultural competency. The end result for this project is that Ball State cadets receive contradictory and confusing instruction about what culture is - one that is at odds with a cultural concept as defined by a liberal arts university and by the broader

academic community. What the cadre members learned during culture training that summer tended to promote the notion of culture as an obstacle (often because they knew or were given no other way of conceptualizing it). This view of culture is reinforced throughout one's military education, leads to a simplified normative understanding of culture and this is seldom questioned by staff and rarely, if ever, deconstructed.

In light of the data collected during this research the question remains: are there any alternatives for providing ROTC cadets, as well as others throughout the Army, better resources for cultural awareness training? Yes and no. Ott tells us that temporary changes in leadership cannot successfully institute long-term changes that run counter to an organization's culture or mission because its members will resist all attempts, placating the leader-come-usurper for only as long as it takes for them to leave or be ousted. However, Ott also states that in order to effect more permanent changes to an organization's culture or mission a leader must influence others to think and act as he does so that when he leaves his disciples will perpetuate those values (exponentially as they rise through the ranks). Herein lies the crux of the matter; ROTC cadets, being highly susceptible to influential leaders as a means to develop successful career and role strategies (Turner's liminal zone), are learning to treat culture as an obstacle. Further, this is repeated and reinforced over time, cadre by cadre. In order to break this trend it is necessary for the Army to put experienced, culturally competent leaders in key positions where they will have the most influence; specifically, as LDAC instructors. But this will not be enough. Getting professional anthropologists involved somewhere (preferably within the liminal zone) within the military education process is imperative. Another method for accomplishing this mission of cultural literacy would be the development of

pedagogical models that takes advantage of the Army's established system of hands on leaning and teamwork as well as the experiences and perceptions of those Soldiers who have been culturally immersed before. Instead of relying on high-ranking officers and policy makers to dictate which cultural literacy techniques should be developed and instituted. This should be done ground up; that is to say let those who know do. Utilizing methods like these is one way to promote flexibility, adaptability, and cultural competency in the leaders of tomorrow and today. Further research aimed at understanding how culture is perceived and utilized both within the force and by opponents is necessary for the Army if it is to be successful in its missions in the 21st century.

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APPENDIX

Acronyms

AAA- American Anthropological Association
ACU- Army Combat Uniform
AFN- Armed Forces Network
AIT- Advanced Individual Training
APFT- Army Physical Fitness Test
AR- Army Regulation
ARNG- Army National Guard
BCT- Basic Combat Training
BCTP- Battle Command Training Center
BDU- Battle Dress Uniform
BMLC- Basic Military Language Course
BOLC- Basic Officer Leadership Course
BRM- Basic Rifle Marksmanship
CA- Civil Affairs
CASL- Center for Advanced Study of Language
CEAUSSIC- Commission of the Engagement of Anthropology with the U.S. Security and Intelligence Communities
CIA- Central Intelligence Agency
CIF- Central Issuing Facility
CDT- Cadet
CFTX- Combined Field Training Exercise
CG- Commanding General
CGSC- Command and General Staff College
COB- Civilians on the Battlefield
COE- Contemporary Operating Environment
CORDS- Civil Operations Revolutionary Development Support
CWST- Combat Water Survival Test
DLI- Defense Language Institute
DoD- Department of Defense
FLRC- Field Leader's Reaction Course
FM- Field Manual
FRAGO- Fragmentary Order
FTX- Field Training Exercise
GWOT- Global War on Terrorism
HOA- Horn of Africa
HTS- Human Terrain System
HTT- Human Terrain Team
IED- Improvised Exploding Device
IET- Initial Entry Training

LDAC- Leadership Development and Assessment Course
MOOTW- Military Operations Other Than War
MOS- Military Occupational Specialty
MRE- Meals Ready to Eat
MS (I, II, III, IV)- Military Science (first year, second year, etc.)
NCOIC- Noncommissioned Officer In Charge
NSEP- National Security Education Program
NSLI- National Security Language Initiative
OIC- Officer In Charge
OML- Order of Merit List
OP- Operations
OPORD- Operations Order
PCS- Permanent Change of Station
PFC- Private First Class
PL- Platoon Leader
PME- Professional Military Education (system)
PMS- Professor of Military Science
PSYOP- Psychological Operations
PT- Physical Training
ROTC- Reserve Officer Training Corp
RPG- Rocket Propelled Grenade
SF- Special Forces
SMP- Simultaneous Membership Program
SOAR- Special Operations Aviation Regiment
SOF- Special Operations Forces
STX- Situational Training Exercise
TM- Technical Manual
TRADOC- Training Doctrine
USACC- United States Army Cadet Command
USAJFKSWC- United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center
USAWC- United States Army War College
WARNO- Warning Order

Line of Questioning

Demographic data

- Age
- Gender
- Hometown
- Academic major
- Prior service (if so, number of years & branch)
- Number of years in ROTC
- Scholarship/non-scholarship/National Guard/Green-to-Gold
- Deployment
- Military schools attended
- Assigned branch
- Family in military (officers or enlisted)
- Number of foreign countries visited

Culture

- How did the training/people differ from the training/people at school?
- What were the other cadets like? How are they alike/different than BSU cadets?
- What was the cadre like? How were they alike/different than BSU cadre?
- What does culture mean to you? How does that compare with society?
- Where did you learn about culture?
- How did you learn what culture is?
- What does being a cadet mean?
- Have you ever been to a foreign country? Deployed? If yes, tell me about it.
- Tell me what you think people in the Middle East are like. Why?
- What is Army life like or what do you think it is like?
- How do you think ROTC has prepared you for life in the Army? Why?
- How does ROTC differ from other groups on campus? Why?
- Tell me about your time in ROTC
- Tell me about the cadets that you feel are the most successful. Why?
- Tell me about cadets who are having a hard time with ROTC. Why do you think they are having a hard time?
- What do think are the differences between officers and enlisted Soldiers? Why?
- How are cadets different from other military personnel?
- Tell me about an average day as an ROTC cadet.
- When learning about foreign cultures, what type of media do you consult the most? Why?
- What people have cultural knowledge?
- Where do you get your knowledge about foreign cultures?
- How has the Army or ROTC changed the way you think about culture? Why?

- What kind of cadet do you respect the most? Why? The least? Why?
- Why do you want to be an officer?
- Why did you choose the Army?
- What is the difference between National Guard, Reserves, & Active Duty?

Training

- Describe LDAC
- What training did you like the best? Why?
- Throughout your ROTC career, what do you feel is the most important training?
- How did the training/people differ from the training/people at school?
- What kind of training do you think will be most useful to you as an officer? Why?
- Tell me about an average day at LDAC.
- What was the weather like at Fort Lewis?
- Tell me about your squad. How were they alike/different than the rest of the platoon?
- What was your favorite training exercise? Why?
- Tell me about PT. Why is PT important or not important?
- What did you expect from LDAC before you got there? How was that different from the reality?
- What do you wish you have known about LDAC prior to going? Why?
- What training did you find to be the most useful? Why?
- How did the BSU ROTC prepare you for LDAC? To what extent was culture addressed?
- How was your platoon alike/different from other platoons? How was your squad alike/different from other squads?

Culture training

- Describe culture training at LDAC.
- Do you think the culture training will be useful to you as an officer? Why or why not?
- Do you think the role players accurately portrayed a foreign culture? Why or why not?
- What do you think they should have done or said differently?
- If you had to be a role player in this type of scenario how would you prepare for your role?
- How successful was your team during the FTX/STX portion of LDAC? What do you think contributed the most to your success or failure?
- Who did you appoint to handle the “civilians on the battlefield”? Why? Was it always the same people or team?

- Who usually spoke with the “locals?” Why? What made them successful in that role?
- What were the toughest things about balancing culture and your mission (FTX/STX lane)? Why?
- How do you think cultural knowledge can help you in accomplishing a mission? Why? How can culture impede a mission?
- How do you think culture will be different when you are deployed? Why?
- Did you use your teammates to “figure out” the culture? How?
- Did cultural knowledge help you accomplish the mission on your (FTX/STX) lane? Why or why not?
- Did you talk about the lanes (at any time) after mission completion? What did you talk about? Why?
- How did you and your team prepare for the FTX/STX? Was cultural knowledge part of you or your team’s preparation? To what extent?
- How knowledgeable were the other cadets about culture?
- What are the key aspects of American culture and which of them are likely to come into play working with someone from, e.g., Afghanistan?
- If the Afghans value family and Americans value family, is that something that makes you the same? Is it something you can build on? If so, how might it work? What are the limits to such possible sameness?
- What more would you like to know about culture, especially regarding those you will encounter, before being deployed?